

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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THE BEAUTY AND TRUTH
OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH

— • —
JONES



TRANSFERRED





THE BEAUTY AND TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SERMONS

FROM THE GERMAN, ADAPTED AND EDITED

BY THE
REV. EDWARD JONES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE
MOST REV. JOHN IRELAND, D.D.
ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL

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FOREWORD

This volume completes the set of five volumes of sermons adapted from the German on The Beauty and Truth of the Catholic Church. The five volumes cover practically the whole field of dogmatic and sacramental theology. For wealth of matter, and beauty of thought logically developed in chaste and elegant diction, the sermons of Heinrich von Hurter are unsurpassed in the German language, that language so rich in homiletic literature.

These sermons were originally preached in series or courses during the academic year by the author in Vienna. It is now generally admitted that the best and most satisfactory way to instruct our Catholic people is by preaching courses of sermons on the vital truths of Christianity. These sermons are eminently adapted for this method of instruction, and have been largely used in this manner by the Editor himself.

The Editor has inserted in this volume and in volume four a number of his own sermons which appeared to him to be more suitable for our times and country than those of the original work. The material used in the composition of these discourses was taken from various German and English sources. He has also incorporated in them some passages from sermons of the Most Reverend John Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul, with the kind permission of his Grace. These extracts were published in the *Northwestern*

Foreword

Chronicle some twenty years ago and appear in these volumes without notation. The Editor, therefore, needs hardly add that there is no claim made to originality in his work. In fact there is little room for originality in doctrinal sermons; the manner of presentation, however, will always bear the impress of the individuality and personality of the speaker, as well as of the character and needs of his audience.

The kind reception which the first volumes have met with from the English speaking clergy and at the hands of the Catholic reviewers has been a source of real pleasure and compensation to the Editor for his labors. He is profoundly grateful for this kindness and for the many kind words of commendation and encouragement which he has received from many of the most eminent members of the hierarchy and clergy of America. He only hopes that by his labors he has placed at the disposal of English speaking priests in these five volumes a work that will bear rich fruits in the hands of all those who avail themselves of its treasures.

The Editor wishes to thank the Reverend John A. Fearon for his valued assistance in the preparation of this work, and also the Very Reverend Dr. H. Moynihan for having read the more important parts of his manuscript and made many valuable suggestions.

THE EDITOR.

Morris, Minnesota.

The Feast of the Immaculate
Conception,
December 8, 1915.

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THE BEAUTY AND TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SERMON I

THE SANCTIFICATION OF SUNDAY IS FOUNDED IN GOD AND IN NATURE

"See that you keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generations."—EXODUS 31, 13.

It is customary to celebrate, throughout the Catholic world, the anniversary of a church's dedication. This feast brings back to our memories the solemn ceremonies and the first offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by which the building, erected as a testimonial to the living faith of believers, was consecrated and set aside to the glory and service of God. Its annual recurrence reminds us of the debt of gratitude which we owe to God, and renews in us the feeling of respect for the house of God. A Catholic community is indeed to be considered fortunate when it possesses a church that is worthy of God, and it speaks well for the generosity of its members. It is a boon and a blessing of which thousands in the wide world are deprived. The house of God is a consecrated spot where we can praise and adore God, and fulfill our

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holiest obligations. Here we become sharers in the Redemption, here Christ the Saviour dwells in our midst, here we receive His sacraments and His grace, here above all else we lay the foundation of our eternal happiness, and here we enjoy the choicest of pleasures. It is here that we can satisfy the cravings of our soul, that we can dry our tears, assuage every sorrow, and fill our hearts with new strength and courage. But it is also in church that we really form a Catholic congregation. Here all of us, be we great or small, aristocrat or commoner, rich or poor, are one heart and one soul, are animated by the same faith, the same hope, the same charity; we have the same claims to redemption and eternal happiness. We enter in the church into communion with the Christian generations that have preceded us, with our parents and ancestors, with the poor souls in purgatory and with the saints in Heaven. Hence the church is the house of God and the vestibule of Heaven; it is the pledge of redemption, the foundation of religion, of morality, of the family and of the state. It is the source of peace, of blessing and of temporal prosperity. Therefore, blessed is he to whom the church is not a strange place; blessed is man if great happiness comes to him, and the earthly dwelling of our heavenly Father becomes for him the entrance to the house of God in Heaven. Therefore God says to each and every one of us: "See that you keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generations."

It is my purpose to speak to you about the sanctification of the Lord's Day, and to show you that it is

grounded in the very Nature of God and in the nature of His creation. This commandment of God is of paramount importance, since on its observance or non-observance depends the blessing or the curse of God, the salvation or the ruin of the individual as well as of all men, of the family as well as of society at large.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. All Catholic truth is based on five imperishable witnesses. Firstly, upon the Word of God Who has revealed it; secondly, upon the blood of the martyrs who have confirmed it; thirdly, upon the hatred of the hordes of impiety who assail it; fourthly, upon the love of the virtuous who defend it; and fifthly, upon the blessings which it sheds abroad. In ordinary times these witnesses furnish the victorious proof of the truth of the Catholic faith. There are, however, periods of intellectual intoxication when man allows himself to be borne away by his arrogance, and permits himself to be overpowered by his senses. In this condition he not only closes eyes and ears so that he may not see nor hear, but even lays violent hands on Catholic truths of faith with the fell purpose of destroying them. For such periods of delirium and unbelief God has reserved another witness to protect His handiwork.

This last witness of Divine Providence are the revolutions. This last testimony to the truth dissipates the darkness that lies brooding over the nations, just as the flash of lightning rends asunder the dense clouds that absorb and hide the sun's rays. Truth then manifests itself to men as it showed itself on

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Mt. Sinai to the Jewish people amid the flashes of lightning and the roll of thunder, or on Mt. Calvary amid the terror of mankind and the violent commotion of nature.

Yes indeed, revolutions lay bare the ground-work of human society, its frightful corruption, the total lack of faith and loyalty, the instability of all conditions, the machinations of secret organizations, the impotence of human laws, and the full extent of the hypocrisy that was practised under the specious guise of civilization, liberty and toleration. It is particularly in times of such upheaval that we can fully understand how necessary the faithful observance of the commandments of God is for the existence and the well-being not only of the individual, but also of whole nations, aye and of the world. We can then understand what we should have done, and why we should have listened to the warnings of the Catholic Church in order to escape total destruction.

For three hundred years the Providence of God gives no other proof of the truth of the Catholic faith than the testimony of the revolutions. It is a proof that makes it as clear to us as the noon-day sun to what fate a nation will come when it throws off its allegiance to faith and to the commandments of God. The Apostles' Creed, the ten commandments of God, the authority of the Church and her laws are the necessary conditions for the life and existence of Christian nations. This truth is eloquently proclaimed by the mountains of ruins spread broadcast over the earth, by the torrents of blood that have been shed, by the

untold misery that has been caused, all through the instrumentality of the revolutions. The dread of impending evils and of coming disasters that is so widespread over the world is another proof of this.

There is one commandment, however, that amid all the varying fortunes of men, has demonstrated the truth and the necessity of its existence both in the Old and in the New Law, and that is the Sanctification of the Lord's Day.

2. I know that the religious education of our children is a question of vital importance to the family as well as to the nation, because on the proper fulfillment of this duty or on the neglect thereof depends the faith or the unbelief, the morality or the viciousness of future generations. But though a Christian education is absolutely necessary to prepare our children properly for the future, we must never forget that the sanctification of the Lord's Day alone will keep men in the paths of righteousness and make them value their faith. As soon as our children leave the hallowed precincts of the Catholic school they enter into an atmosphere that is fraught with infidelity, and without a support of some kind they will soon fall a prey to the godless and vicious maxims of a wicked world. No sooner does a nation begin to disregard the sanctity of Sunday, that day of the Lord, that day of prayer and of rest, than it becomes unchristian, and intercourse with it is fraught with the most fatal consequences for the youthful mind. In such a case every hope of salvation disappears; human society is preparing its own misfortune and working out its own

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destruction. Then all the honeyed phrases of culture, of humanity, of a new era and of constitutional liberty are of no avail. Deception also is no longer possible. The condition and ills of society, the hopelessness and misery that prevail universally in the temporal and moral phases of human life are evident to every one who wishes to see. Neither armies nor constitutions nor the laws of man can stem the ruinous tide. Christians and Christian nations alone can accomplish this. We must be our own saviours, and we become such by returning to God. But how can this return be possible if we disregard our most sacred duty upon the proper fulfillment of which depend all our other Christian obligations? This great duty is the keeping holy of the Lord's Day. Without it there is neither Christianity nor redemption. "Keep you my sabbath, for it is holy unto you: he that shall profane it shall be put to death: he that shall do any work in it, his soul shall perish out of the midst of his people" (Exodus 31, 14). The words of God are subject to no change. His promises, His blessing, His redemption and His grace are as active to-day as they ever were. In like manner His menaces and His punishments retain their ancient vigor. And, in fact, if we consider the misfortunes that came over the Jewish people, be they sickness or famine or bondage among a hostile people, we find that they were a consequence of the desecration of the Sabbath. In turn we find that like misfortunes befall the Christian nations as soon as they desecrate the Sunday. The Jewish people were a

prototype of the Christian nations even in their punishments.

And, in sooth, there is no more ancient law than the sanctification of the Lord's Day; there is none that has outlasted the catastrophes of the world, there is none so much the ground and pillar of the world as this one. The obligation of consecrating one day out of seven exclusively to the worship of God has outlived all the changes of time. Yea, this truth is as unchangeable as God Himself. "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day!" This divine command rings in the ears of the human race from the confines of Paradise to the dread heights of Sinai, from Sinai to the blood-gorged hill of Calvary, and from Calvary to the uttermost limits of the earth. All coming centuries will repeat this divine command until time shall be merged in the bosom of eternity, when that eternal rest, of which our earthly Sunday is the prototype, will begin. The Catholic Church, the mother and guide of men and of peoples, has assumed this commandment of God into her own code of laws with the purpose of determining more specifically the manner and the solemnity of its celebration. She simply reiterates what the bygone ages already knew and practised, namely the sanctification of Sunday as the Lord's Day. In this commandment the Church is at one with God, with the world, and with the whole human race during all the past ages.

In fact, my dearly beloved, whole libraries might be filled with the writings of those who, through the

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course of nineteen centuries, have tried to impress on Christian nations alone the sanctity, the blessing, the advantages of the Sunday rest and the dreadful consequences of its desecration. And should we wish to go farther with our researches and count the multitude of civil laws that have been passed from the days of Constantine until the present time by the emperors, kings and princes of the past ages, to enforce, under heavy penalties, the sanctification of the Lord's Day, we should never end. All this merely goes to prove the immeasurable grandeur of this divine commandment of the sanctification of the Lord's Day, and likewise the frightful malice and the baneful consequences of its desecration.

The firmament with the sun, moon and the stars proclaim to all human generations the evanescence of time and the rest on the seventh day. The firmament is a marvelous clock; its two luminous hands are the sun and the moon, which indicate the days, the weeks, the months and the years. They teach us that as creatures exist for the sake of man, so man exists for God alone. They teach us, moreover, three great mysteries: the mystery of life — it is short; the mystery of death — it is not everlasting; the mystery of the resurrection — it is as certain as life and death. They call our attention to the two most solemn moments of human life, its beginning and its end, birth and death, and teach us that every day is to be commenced and ended with the adoration of God. All peoples, even the pagan ones, have understood this language of the

heavens. Hence it is the constant practice of the world to say morning and evening prayers.

The moon changes four times a month. During six days it is assuming a different form and on the seventh day it remains stationary. It thus fulfills the intention of its Creator and teaches man the six days of work and the day of rest. Hence all the nations know the day of rest and listen to Him Who created the moon. The Creator expresses Himself beautifully in Holy Writ: "And the moon, in all her season, is for a declaration of times and a sign of the world. From the moon is the sign of the festival day, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her perfection" (Eccles. 43, 6-8).

Whence does it come that even the heathen peoples believed in the natural diversity of days, in days of holiness and in days of ordinary import? The Author of all days solves this question in the Sacred Scriptures: "Why doth one day excell another, and one light another, and one year another year, when all come of the sun? By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished, the sun being made, and keeping his commandment. And he ordered the seasons, and holy-days of them: and in them they celebrated festivals at an hour. Some of them God made high and great days: and some of them he put in the number of ordinary days" (Eccles. 33, 7-10).

How sublime a picture the heavens shows us — those heavens that proclaim the glory of God and tell

of the work of His omnipotence! With one hand the Lord of all things takes a portion of our life, blesses it, sanctifies it and keeps it for Himself as a tithe and an homage. With the other hand He places the greatest number of our days in the uniform circle of weeks, months and years. He, the Lord of life and of death, reserves for Himself these few days of the Lord, that in them we may serve Him more zealously and with greater gratitude. In recompense for our homage He blesses and protects us all the more during the days of our labor.

Through the ages all the nations of the earth have acknowledged and obeyed this truth. Whence comes it then that now so many, not only of individual Christians but also of Christian nations, disregard this truth, trample this great commandment of God under foot, and so destroy the very harmony of nature? Who dares presume to imagine that this desecration of the Sunday will be unattended by the most frightful temporal and eternal consequences both for the individual and for society at large? These consequences are vast and terrible; they are commensurate with the majesty of God and with the holiness of His Day. If the thrones of kings are shattered, if nations must battle for their very existence, if often thousands of families and business men are suddenly ruined, they have only themselves to blame for it—they have desecrated the Sunday. The reason why religion and morality are fast disappearing, why crime and poverty are daily becoming more widespread, can easily be found in the fact that the Sunday is almost universally

desecrated. The Sunday holds a wonderful promise of grace and of blessing for us, but also the terrible curse of punishment and disgrace. Therefore God proclaimed clearly the law: "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day." In very truth the desecration of the Sunday brings with it the ruin of all religion and the ultimate destruction of the family. In other words, to desecrate the Sunday means nothing more and nothing less than to destroy the dignity and prosperity of the human race.

Let us, at least, my dearly beloved, observe this great commandment of God and keep holy the Lord's Day, so that it may become for us truly a blessing and a grace for body and soul, the pledge of divine assistance, the source of eternal redemption and the exemplar of a happy resurrection and of eternal repose in Heaven. Amen.

SERMON II

THE DESECRATION OF THE SUNDAY IS THE RUIN OF RELIGION

“See that you keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generation.”—EXODUS 31, 13.

We spoke the last time about the Sunday and its sanctification. And in sooth no commandment is more ancient than this one. It has been with us since the days of Paradise and will endure unto the threshold of eternity, yea into the very realm of Heaven. No religious law is so universal, since it embraces all the peoples: the pagans, the Turks, the Jews and the Christians. It has withstood every vicissitude of time, every catastrophe of the world, for it is the pillar and the ground of the human race. All creatures praise their Creator, the heavens proclaim His glory and His omnipotence, and the hosts of Heaven give homage to God and sing the praises of the thrice holy God. In like manner the human race on earth is bound to praise and adore God its Lord and Creator, and to offer Him the sacrifice of its homage. For this reason God has reserved one day of the week for Himself and designated it as a day of rest and adoration for men. No commandment is so replete with promise as this one: “Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day.”

And again no commandment brings with it such dire threats of punishment for time and eternity, for temporal and eternal perdition as this one. Hence Jews and Christians place it in the front rank of the commandments of God. And for the same reason it is of the first importance in all Christian codes of law. The captivity of the Jews, every calamity that befell them, the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and its profanation by the heathens—all these had been threatened by God to avenge the desecration of the Lord's Day.

And now, my dearly beloved, has God changed in the New Law? Or has the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, become less holy because the Apostles transferred it to Sunday in memory of Christ's Resurrection, of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and to differentiate them from the Jews? Or are the Christians, upon whom God has lavished more graces and benefits than upon the Jews, less obliged to gratitude, fidelity and adoration? Is the son of the Cross, the Christian, for whom Jesus bled upon the Cross, less obliged to live for the salvation of his soul and for the adoration and the love of God, than the bondsman of the Ancient Law, the Jew? or than the poor pagan who is deprived of the knowledge of the one true God? No, this commandment of God, "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day," has a greater and holier importance for us, but its non-observance is also attended with more dreadful consequences for us.

The first of these consequences is the ruin of religion not only for the individual, but also for whole

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nations. I shall therefore speak to-day of his first consequence.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. What do we mean by religion? Religion is the bond and union of man with God. Religion is the tie that unites us with God. Now religion is not only for the individual but for all, and manifests itself in the public adoration of God, in the public profession of faith, in public worship; hence the desecration of the Sunday is the destruction of religion. God Himself has established the Sunday as the public sign of His Covenant with men. And in fact, what has ever been the war cry of those who rebelled against God? Was it open atheism, or professed sensuality, or the robbery of the Church's patrimony? Such crudity would be revolting to the majority of men, and would give too patent an evidence of their ultimate aim. No, they have inscribed on their banners what the Royal Prophet read upon them more than three thousand years ago: "Let us abolish all the festival days of God from the land" (Ps. 73, 8).

Verily, the trend of evil is unmistakable; it does not always strike hard, but it strikes surely. As soon as a nation begins generally to desecrate the Sunday, it readily loses all knowledge and practice of religion, it offers up no prayers, it receives no sacraments, it renders no public act of worship. Experience teaches this, and it is a fact which is patent to everybody.

Now, what happens to the individual Christian who is guilty of a constant disregard of the Lord's Day?

Let us begin with the children. They have learned a little catechism while they attended instructions, but if they fail to keep holy the Sunday they will forget the little they knew in a few short years. It is a matter of sad experience that many people of advanced years no longer know the Apostles' Creed. What right have we then to expect such as these to know anything about the commandments of God, about the laws of the Church, or about the sacraments? Yea, it is not infrequent that we meet with people who know nothing about Jesus Christ. The desecration of the Sunday is the destruction of religion in the individual.

But let us assume that the adult has not forgotten the instruction which he received, but on the contrary knows all the truths of his holy religion. Even this knowledge will not suffice. If these truths are to be conducive to the salvation of the soul they must exercise a great influence on the heart and the will. We must therefore often meditate upon them, and have them frequently explained to us. The desecration of the Sunday renders this impossible, and all the influence that religion may possess, is entirely lost upon the mind and the will, but especially on the conduct of life. When will the servant, the laborer, the tradesman find time to meditate on the truths of Heaven if those who are in a position to give the example fail to do their duty? Their failure can only be ascribed to a lack of good will. For all these the desecration of the Sunday is the destruction of religion and with it of every grace and of redemption.

The fact becomes all the more serious, for the sanctification of Sunday is the absolutely necessary condition of our union with God. "The Sabbath," says God to Moses in Exodus 31, 16, "is an everlasting covenant between me and the children of Israel, and a perpetual sign." Now what the Sabbath was in the Old Law, that and more is the Sunday in the New Law. Hence I shall put to each of you the same question that the persecutors put to the first Christians: "I do not ask you if you are a Christian, but I wish to know if you observe the Sunday?" From this we can see that in the sound judgment of the pagans the sanctification of the Sunday was the mark of the true Christian. The desecration of the Sunday is therefore a practical denial of the faith. There are many in our day who vaunt their Christianity and ever pretend that they are very pious Christians, but in reality they are nothing more than rebels against God.

2. I say: *rebels against God*. The desecration of the Sunday is an open revolt against God. And this with its dreadful consequences is a more terrible misfortune than all the lost battles of the world. Every seventh day a countless number of men of every condition in life place themselves in open rebellion against God; in their awful presumption they revolt against the most sacred commandment of God. The church bells call to service; they invite us all to come and adore and praise the Lord; they plead with us to assist at the Unbloody Sacrifice, to be united with Jesus the Saviour and the Judge of men. But deaf to every appeal are the ears of many, and everywhere and

in every way we see a shameful disregard of the holiness of the day. The call of pleasure and of self-interest is stronger than the call of duty. Can there be a greater crime than this? The desecration of the Sunday is the ruin of all religion.

3. But the desecration of the Sunday is more than an open revolt against God — it is a frank profession of atheism and of disbelief in God. And this is the truest and most hateful characteristic of the Sunday profanation. There is no religion, not even a pagan one, that is without its public act of worship. Religion is intended not for one, but for all men without exception, and unites us all with God. Hence the whole nation must take part in a public act of worship, because thereby it makes an open profession of its faith and declares that it is a religious people. All the nations of the earth have known and acknowledged this: Christian, Jews, Turks and heathens; we do not find a single exception among the nations.

Public worship must, however, have its appointed time, its definite day, when all may unite in the same belief and in the same adoration — a spectacle worthy of Heaven. God has established this day for the Christian peoples; it is the Sunday. A nation, therefore, that does not sanctify the Sunday has become more degraded than the very pagans, for it openly professes its atheism, its disbelief in God. Or do you think that a few sentimental considerations, a few pious thoughts, a few banal phrases constitute true faith and a real worship of God? If you believe in God, honor Him, adore Him, and observe His command-

ments! Remember that the following is the most sacred of His mandates: "See that you keep my sabbath; because it is a sign between me and you in your generation." The profanation of the Sunday is the destruction of religion in the individual as well as among the nations.

But what do we understand by the destruction of religion? It means the dissolution of our bond with God, with Christ the Redeemer, with the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier; it means the annihilation of redemption, of grace, of Christian virtue, of faith, hope and charity; it means the blotting out of piety, morality, honesty, faith and loyalty, of obedience and of every respect for authority. The desecration of the Sunday implies rebellion against God, selfishness, brute sensuality and the slipping of the leash to all the passions.

But the destruction of religion brings further evils in its train: might without right and justice, consideration without respect, constitutions without stability, laws without obedience, sacrifice without recompense, sorrows without consolation, despair, suicide, ferment and dissolution of every legitimate tie. Whence all conspirators against the established order of things inscribe on their banners: "Let us abolish all the festival days of God from the land." For the profanation of the Sunday is the ruin of religion. Look upon the condition of our public affairs, consider the menaces that the future holds for us: my language is not too severe.

If I have called the child by its name, if I have en-

deavored to show you the true characteristics of the desecration of the Sunday with its evil consequences, I have done so with the laudable purpose of strengthening and confirming you in the faithful fulfillment of your most sacred obligation as men and as Christians. Keep ye holy the Sunday. I thank God that you are animated with the desire of doing so. Your conduct is a proof of this. One thing, however, I ask of you: do not restrict the sanctification of the Sunday to your own selves. Give your children and all those who are dependent on you an opportunity of adoring and praising God on the Lord's Day. Never render yourselves guilty of preventing them from fulfilling their sacred obligations. You know now that faith and grace and salvation depend on this. May God grant that the magnificent promises which He has attached to the faithful observance of His Day may find their accomplishment in us both in time and in eternity. May our Sunday on earth be changed to the unending Sunday in Heaven, whither we are called to adore and praise God with His angels and His saints through a blessed eternity. Amen.

SERMON III

THE DESECRATION OF THE SUNDAY IS THE RUIN OF THE FAMILY

“See that you keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generation.”—EXODUS 31, 13.

My preceding instructions dealt with the sanctification of the Sunday and with the dire consequences attending its desecration. No commandment of God is so holy, so venerable, so necessary and so universal. There is none that God tries to impress on us with such emphatic language: “Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day!” This commandment is in reality the groundwork of all the other commandments, of all faith, morality and prosperity. No Catholic can say that he believes in God, none can glorify God’s name if he does not faithfully observe this commandment. Without this commandment no Christian will ever be able to learn his duties towards himself and towards his neighbor, much less practice them. Hence it comes that the profanation of the Sunday is the cause of such unprecedented ignorance in all matters of religion, the cause of blasphemy and unbelief. It is the frank admission of apostasy from God, and marks the ruin of religion for the individual as well as for the nations. But the consequences of the Sunday desecration do not rest here; they continue without abatement to grow in menace and to gnaw at the

very vitals of human society. The desecration of the Sunday not only annihilates religion, grace, redemption and eternal salvation, but it also destroys all peace, all the blessings and prosperity of the earthly life.

We shall consider to-day the dreadful harm that the profanation of the Sunday inflicts on the family. I here maintain with all the force of which I am capable that the desecration of the Sunday leads to the ultimate ruin of the family. Whither will a man turn from the injustice, the hatred, the sorrow, the meanness he encounters in the world if not to his family? It is the last possession, the last asylum that remains to him. It is only in the precincts of the home that the Christian can find the peace and the calm that public life denies him. The family is the only place of refuge where the citizen, be he menial or master, rich or poor, can find joy and recreation after all the hardships of the day. It is within the sacred shelter of the home that the wife and children can find protection and respect. It is the sanctified spot where the many girls, who devote themselves to the fulfillment of domestic duties among strangers, are assured that their innocence and honor are safe. But all this is destroyed, man's last place of refuge is devastated, his asylum is ruined and his sacred place is desecrated, and all that by the profanation of the Sunday.

In very truth, my dearly beloved, the desecration of the Sunday is the ruin of the family. This will form the subject of our consideration to-day.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

The Christian family is the groundwork upon which Church and State are erected. Hence to its share falls the fulfillment of the most important religious and civic duties. Religion, morality, law and the prosperity of the nations depend on the family, because the nations or governments are nothing more than the union of many families, for before the nations existed the family was. It was this consideration that impelled Our Divine Saviour to raise marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. In consequence of this sacramental character the father is the representative of Jesus Christ, the image of God the Father, the object of the family's respect and love. The mother is called to be in her family circle what the Catholic Church is for the whole world: the messenger of peace and the guide in the ways of salvation. The children are to the Christian family what the faithful are to the Catholic Church. All are indeed bound to obey, but all share equally in redemption, in the sacraments and the heavenly truths of the Church. Holy are the obligations that the father has toward the family, holy are the duties of the mother, holy the duties of the children.

The parents are obliged, as well as the children, to learn these duties, since without a knowledge of them there can be no fulfillment, and because on their proper observance depend the welfare and prosperity of the family. Religion alone can impart this necessary knowledge, and give the strength and grace to fulfill them. Religion teaches the father in presence of all the faithful that like to Our Divine Saviour, Who

protects His Church, guides her with His holy grace, enlightens her with His doctrine and nourishes her with His Body and Blood in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, so is he obliged to treat his spouse with respect and love, and be a shining example to his whole family by the faithful fulfillment of his Christian duties, for this alone will animate his home circle with the true Christian spirit and will bring blessing and peace from above.

It is religion alone that, in presence of all the faithful, teaches the mother the sacredness of her obligations towards her husband and family. Religion teaches her that like to the Church who is loyal and obedient to her Divine Saviour, she is obliged to show herself faithful and respectful. Her life must be a life of daily sacrifice; she must be an angel of peace, of gentleness, of love and of work. The mother must govern her household with the mildness and strength with which Divine Providence rules the world.

Both the father and the mother, in the presence of God and of the faithful, learn their duties towards their children. The children are not the victims and playthings of caprice and cruelty, without regard being taken of their hearts and their souls. They are the treasures of God, heirs of Heaven and angels of innocence on earth, who belong to God and who have been entrusted to the parents to be brought up for Heaven and not for the world.

But the children, too, in the presence of the faithful and of their own parents, learn that they are obliged to honor, obey, love and assist their parents in all their

needs both of body and of soul, before and after their death. They also learn the promises and the punishments of the fourth commandment.

But, my dearly beloved, how can a family be animated with the knowledge of its holiest obligations, if it has become habituated to the desecration of the Sunday? The bare knowledge of a duty, however, is not sufficient to insure its fulfillment. To do this we need moral force and courage and above all things we need God's grace. No duties require so much loyalty, devotion and sacrifice as the duties of the family, of the father, of the mother, the children. God alone, religion alone can inspire us with the sense of our duty and preserve it in us. But how can God give His grace and courage if father and mother and children do not ask Him for it, if they do not keep holy the Lord's Day, if they do not mutually encourage and edify one another at the public worship of God? And what will become of the family without God and His grace?

Without fear of reasonable contradiction I say: In most cases of such kind the family is burdened with a hard and passionate, careless and improvident father. The mother is feeble and worldly minded, capricious and idle, and far too often unfaithful. The children are disrespectful and disobedient, pampered and unruly. Frequently the roof-tree shelters not a paradise of peace and of love, but a veritable hell. The family exists only in name, and as an institution endowed with mere brutish instincts, and not as a true copy of the

Holy Family of Nazareth, of Joseph and Mary with the Divine Child Jesus.

These are no idle vaporings, my dearly beloved, but actual facts, for which we find ample, though sad, proofs in the countless complaints and discords of families, in the frequent adulteries and divorces, in the tears and the blasphemies of a neglected youth. The profanation of the Sunday is the ruin of the family.

But the desecration of the Sunday is not merely the ruin of the family, because it leads to the neglect of the most sacred obligations which are absolutely necessary for its existence. The desecration of the Sunday also disrupts the bonds that should unite most intimately all the different members of the family. Where does the father generally stay when he has finished his day's work? Will you find him in the family circle in the midst of his children? Not at all. They see him seldom and then only for a few short moments. The saloon, the gaming table, evil companions claim his presence. And where will you find the mother? In the midst of her children? Seldom. All her interests center in the theatre, in her visits, in society, in the fashions and in gossip, and her children are often left to the thoughtless care of the servants. Such are the conditions that prevail among all classes of society, be they rich or poor, noble or common. Every one lives according to his ways or means. And so it goes day after day, week after week, year after year. Not even the Sunday brings the family together for prayers in common, for public worship, for conversation and rec-

reation. Sunday seems to exist only to be profaned. Under such conditions father and mother are no better than wild beasts, one of whom goes out in the morning to seek fodder for his young, while the other cleans the pit and protects the offspring. As soon as the young have grown stronger they may run whither they will. This is the last degrading occupation to which the desecration of the Sunday condemns the noblest and holiest form of earthly life, the family. Every inspiration, every dignity, every semblance to the Holy Family of Nazareth, every grace and blessing is sunk in the mire of greed and sensuality, and the family becomes the breeding-place of impiety and vice.

This, however, is not the full extent of the ravages caused in the family by the desecration of the Sunday. Families have even become impossible. Who can tell the countless thousands of children who never get to see the light of day, or those numberless others who have never known the fostering care of a father and a mother, who wander about in the filth and the misery of the slums of our cities and fall a prey to every form of vice? Wild beasts feed and protect their young; they will even sacrifice their lives for them. Father, mother, human beings, Christians, make things easier for themselves; they cast their children as premature orphans on the cold mercies of a cruel world. This is one of the ripe fruits of Sunday profanation! An increasingly large number of our young men do not wish to get married and found a Christian family; they prefer to spend their lives in debauchery. This is another fruit of Sunday profanation! Thousands of

young girls cast themselves into the arms of vice: another fruit of the Sunday profanation. It annihilates the family and fosters idleness, crime and pride. Truly Christian families are yearly becoming more rare, and even these are partially threatened with dissolution. The enemies of Christian marriage and family have reason to rejoice. The desecration of the Sunday is their faithful ally. The desecration of the Sunday is the ruin of the family and hence of human society, of liberty, justice and prosperity. No amount of nice talk about culture, enlightenment and toleration can compensate for the destruction of what is the best and noblest of man's possessions on earth.

The sacred repose of the Sunday is alone capable of preventing the degradation and the destruction of the family. It is on this day that the different members of the family learn to know and love one another; it is then that they grow conscious of their duties; it is then that united in the blessed shelter of the home they send up their prayer to God, the Giver of all good things. It is then that the children can see that their parents are obedient to God and His commandments, that they possess faith and piety. It is then that they also learn respect and obedience; it is then that the family grows Christian, and the bond that ties them together becomes milder and stronger. It is thus that the hearth receives a new consecration, the precious pledge of harmony and the best means of protecting good morals. Nothing is better calculated to afford innocent pleasure and to prohibit ennui and extravagance to enter into the home than recreation and play

enjoyed in common. Hence God says so impressively to the family: "See that you keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generation."

In truth, my dearly beloved, the Sunday is of paramount importance to the whole human race. On its sanctification or profanation depend the weal or woe of millions. In like manner the Sunday is the foundation of every family. Sunday is like unto a messenger of Heaven who reminds us of what is eternal and heavenly. It is an angel of peace who, by means of its splendid language and by the inspiration of divine service, whispers words of peace and forgiveness into hearts torn by dissension. It silences the passions, it allays unrest and caprice, and by showing us the figure of Our Crucified Saviour it invites to patience and Christian forbearance. And God, Who is a God of Peace, inspires us by His grace with sentiments of peace and harmony.

The Sunday rest is for the Christian family a foretaste of that eternal rest which is destined to be its blessed recompense in Heaven. The celebration of the Sunday is the splendid, noble bond that makes the family to be a Christian family, and raises it to the dignity of an image of the Holy Family of Nazareth. When father and mother approach the altar accompanied by their children, when they unitedly raise their prayers to God, then forsooth they present a spectacle that rejoices God and His angels. When one heart, one soul, one faith, one hope, one love unite them, and when their prayer rises as from one mouth to Heaven, then Jesus,

in accordance with His promises, abides in their midst and bestows on them grace and mercy. Yea, wheresoever father and mother together receive the sacraments, they offer to their children an example that is more compelling than thousands of books and thousands of words.

What is there that can make a family more worthy in the sight of God and men, what can win for them greater confidence and respect, than the Sunday rest and the Sunday celebration? It is this that invests the family with a higher consecration; it is this that makes the family shine forth in the splendor of Christian faith, of Christian harmony and mutual love. It is this that preserves and ennobles conjugal fidelity. It inspires parents with the love and the care for the welfare of their children that is an outpouring of the Divine Love and solicitude for our temporal and eternal welfare. It nourishes and fosters filial respect and obedience. It maintains parents in the grace of God, the children in their innocence and piety, and brings to both parents and children days of peace and of joy.

Would that all of you who are here present, especially fathers and mothers, might be convinced of this solemn truth, and might seek in the celebration of the Sunday what you can never find in its desecration, namely, love and harmony, temporal and eternal salvation! How many fathers, how many mothers wear themselves out with work for the sake of their families, and yet their tireless endeavor and striving is nothing more than an endless chain of cares and vexations, of ingratitude and misery. Seek first there where you are sure to find!

The blessing of God is attached to the sanctification of the Sunday, and in the worthy celebration of the Lord's Day we shall find the one precious boon that sweetens and alleviates everything, namely, patience and confidence in God, peace of conscience and of heart. The celebration of the Sunday, however, proclaims to us that which of all things is the highest and the best. He who has faithfully accomplished his work during the week and then rests on Sunday and celebrates the day in a Christian manner, he will enjoy an everlasting Sunday in Heaven and will there rest forevermore in an eternity of bliss, after he has accomplished his duties as a Christian here below. May we think of this happiness every Sunday, and may the unfailing mercy of God grant it to us as a splendid reward for the fidelity with which we shall have sanctified the Lord's Day on earth. Amen.

SERMON IV

WHAT THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SUNDAY MEANS TO THE CHRISTIAN

"I rejoice at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord."—Ps. 121, 1.

How beautiful is the Christian ecclesiastical year, adorned with a bright garland of splendid feasts — feasts of our Lord, of our Blessed Lady and of the great saints! The feast of Christmas, when we celebrate the anniversary of Our Divine Saviour's birth, is replete with emotion, and causes us the deepest joy. On this day the world of Christian children joyfully greets the Divine Infant, and in Him is glad of its own redemption and grace. The world of the poor raises eyes and hands to the Divine Child and feels itself strengthened and consoled in its poverty. The sick and the suffering find consolation and strength in the Divine Child, the rich receive from Him the impulse to be merciful, and all Christians rejoice because through Him they have all become the children of God. The days of Holy Week are solemn and striking. They are the days when we are vividly reminded of the Passion of Our Divine Lord and Saviour. The days of Easter are days of glory for Our Divine Saviour and days of joy for us, for the Resurrection of Christ is a pledge of our own resurrection to a better life. Equally glori-

ous for the Saviour and consoling for us is the feast of His Ascension into Heaven, for we know that Jesus, the Just One, is now our Intercessor before the throne of His heavenly Father. The feast of Pentecost reminds us of the fact that the Holy Ghost guides and rules the Church in all truth, and sanctifies and comforts and assists us during our whole life. How beautifully the feasts of Our Blessed Lady fit in between all these; how they gladden mind and heart! The Annunciation, the Assumption, the Nativity and the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady. And again we have the days of the glorious Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, of St. Stephen, St. John the Baptist and of all the others who, as faithful servants of the Lord, followed Him on earth in joy and in sorrow, and now possess with Him the eternal glories of Heaven, whence they point out to us the way to attain the same happiness.

Yes, truly, the Church is the place where, more than elsewhere, we obtain the grace and the mercy of God. It is the place of our regeneration, of our sanctification and of our redemption. It is the house of God, where God abides among men and where men may converse with Him. It is the abiding-place of the holiest mysteries, the house of rest and of peace, where all Christians, great and small, high and low, rich and poor, are the family of God, one heart and one soul. Hence it represents to us the paradise of Heaven and the gate of Heaven.

To-day as yesterday, and during all the ages, the Christian in church is the disciple of the Lord. There

he hears the words and the teachings of God, as once did the Apostles and the Jewish people. We find there the poor, the sick, the sinner, who have come to the Saviour to implore His mercy and to hear the sweet words: "Be of good heart, thy faith hath saved thee!" In the church the faithful come to the Saviour, as once did the Jews in the desert, or rather as the Apostles did at the Last Supper, to be nourished by Him unto life eternal. It is there that they are blessed by Him; it is there that they are the witnesses of His life, His teachings, His miracles, His Passion, His Resurrection and His Ascension. Hence the church is truly the house of God and of His faithful, and the commandment to sanctify the Sunday is a great and a decisive one for time and for eternity.

It is my purpose to speak once more on this topic, and to point out to you to-day what the sanctification of the Sunday means for the Christian. Would that all those within the hearing of my voice might take these words to heart, since everything depends on the sanctification of the Sunday — faith, grace, religion, the welfare of the family, the salvation of the soul, a Christian death and eternal happiness.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

I. Sunday is the Lord's Day, hence a day when man should rest from his ordinary work and devote his time entirely to the service of God, to adoring and glorifying Him. Men set aside a definite time for all important transactions, the week, the day, yea, the very hour is predetermined. The courts of law set a definite day

for the cases that are to come before them, the employer decides when work is to begin and when it is to end, the mother sets the time for the meals, the teacher for the school, the farmer for his plowing, the huntsman for the chase. Is God alone to be denied the right of deciding on a definite time, a definite day for the holiest and most important action that man can and must accomplish on earth? Yea, my dearly beloved, since all men are bound to give to God this public and outward adoration, God Himself was obliged to establish this day for the benefit of man, so that all could assemble at the same time to take part in Divine Service. If God had left to man the designation of this day, nothing but the greatest disorder and conflict and discord would have resulted. Fathers, teachers, mothers, employers cannot leave the choice of the time that is to be devoted to work, to the school and to household affairs to the servants or the children without having to fear the greatest disorder; they themselves must fix the time.

God has ordered the sanctification of the Sunday for the welfare of man, for the preservation of faith and of religion. It is on Sunday that the entire Christian world is assembled to praise, thank and adore God, and it is on this day that it is united with the angels and the saints in jubilation and adoration. On Sunday the Christian world becomes a grand, splendid congregation. It must be a spectacle worthy of God when on the same day in all parts of the inhabited globe, from the rising of the sun unto the setting thereof, the Christian world with one voice honors and

praises God the Father for the work of His creation; when with one voice it honors and thanks God the Son for the Redemption, when with one voice it adores God the Holy Ghost and honors His grace. It must be a grand spectacle, worthy of God, when on the same day in all the churches of the earth the Christian world with one hand offers the Immaculate Sacrifice to the Triune God; when as with one heart it believes and hopes and loves; when it gathers as the great family of God for the same act of worship, and when they all feel that they are the children of God, the heirs of Heaven, Christian and brethren.

This is marvelously well expressed in the Preface or the hymn of praise of the Mass, where the priest summons the faithful to give praise to God in the following words: "Lift up your hearts!" After having received the answer: "We have raised them to God," he continues the hymn to God the Almighty and Eternal: "Through Jesus Christ, through whom the Angels and the Archangels praise His Majesty, the Dominations adore Him, the Powers tremble, the heavens and the Virtues of Heaven and the blessed Seraphim are united in joyous exultation. Permit us, we beseech Thee, to join our voices with theirs to proclaim in suppliant confession: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Sabbath."

Yea, even the whole of inanimate creation joins in this hymn of praise: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands" (Ps. 18, 2). "O Lord our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth!" (Ps. 8, 2).

The whole world with its countless creatures is an immense organ, that sounds the praises of the Creator throughout the entire universe. But Jesus Christ is like the master that plays this organ. He is the High Priest Who accompanies it with His voice and thus only gives it the true expression of the praise of God. It is also through Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, that all our adoration, all our praise, all our good works, every act of gratitude, every tear, every Christian suffering arises to God. He, as our High Priest, unites all our prayers and sacrifices to His prayers and Sacrifice, and so offers them to God His heavenly Father. It is not without reason that the Sunday is so great a day, and it is with truth that it is called the Lord's Day, for through Jesus Christ it unites the whole Christian world, yea even the universe, for the praise and adoration of God. It is not without reason that the commandment of keeping holy the Sunday is of such importance, and that on its proper fulfillment depend time and eternity, the preservation of religion, the welfare of families, the blessing of God and the consciousness of our heavenly vocation as Christians and heirs of Heaven.

3. For this reason the desecration of the Sunday is also so great a crime against God and against ourselves. But what must not have happened in such Christians before they reached the point of desecrating the Sunday? Before they sank so low as to deny God the adoration that is His due, and to exclude themselves from the circle of the faithful? If such men, I no longer call them Christians, if such men, moreover,

consider it a disadvantage and a waste of time to join their brethren in thanking, praising and adoring God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, what can or shall we think of them? What crust of ice must not have formed around their hearts, and what dread mysteries of apostasy from God, of blindness and passion does not this condition of affairs reveal? Thou, O man, art a sacrilegious wretch! By thy profanation of the Sunday thou robbest God of His Day, of the Lord's Day! By thine own act thou cuttest thyself away from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. By thine own act thou executest the sentence of exclusion from Holy Church, from the communion of the saints and from the company of the saved! The leaf that falls from the tree does not fall of its own volition, but through thine own fault thou hast fallen away from the tree of life, of redemption. The worm that thou tramplest under foot does not die by its own act, but thou diest because of thine own fault, voluntarily thou tramplest under foot the salvation of thy soul! The leaf and the worm glorified God by their existence, but man dishonors Him, and by the desecration of the Sunday he becomes a criminal against God and against himself.

4. Yea verily, my dearly beloved, the Sunday and its sanctification has an extraordinary significance for each and every Christian. By keeping holy the Sunday every human being fulfills the most sacred obligation of its existence on earth, namely, to serve God, to honor and adore Him, in order to become eternally happy.

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For this reason so many of God's favors are attached to the celebration of Sunday, and the house of God, where we gather to perform our duties, offers the soul so much consolation and so much grace and joy. Most beautiful are the words of the Epistle read at the Mass proper to the feast of the dedication of a church: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more" (Apoc. 21, 4). And though this promise will find its full accomplishment in Heaven, it still is partially fulfilled in our churches, which are an image of Heaven and the vestibule to eternal happiness.

God is indeed ever ready to dry our tears, to assuage sorrow and pain, if we come with confidence to His house and there beg Him for mercy. How many of you, my dearly beloved, have already made this happy experience! How many Christian fathers and how many Christian mothers have prayed and wept in church for their children, and God has heard their prayer and dried their tears. How many an anxious troubled soul has come to church and there pleaded for help with streaming eyes, and God has allayed its fears and swept away its sorrows. How many a child's prayer has risen there for the safety of its parents, and God has listened to its prayer. And who will count the sin-laden multitudes, who finding peace nowhere, have come with contrite heart like the Prodigal Son to beg the Father of all mercies to press them once again to His paternal bosom and grant them peace and grace and joy of soul? In the church stand the

baptismal font, the confessionals, the altars, the tabernacle, the communion railing, bearing eloquent witness to the mercy and the bounty of God. All these have served us from the earliest days of our childhood, and not only us but also our parents and our ancestors. For them also the waters were taken from the baptismal font, to cleanse them from sin and to make of them Christians and children of God. For them, too, the doors of the tabernacle opened to nourish them for life eternal. The confessionals have also heard their acknowledgment of sin, their contrition and purpose of amendment, and if their confession was a worthy one, they were dismissed therefrom consoled and re-established in the grace of God. And from the pulpit our parents and forefathers have received many a salutary lesson and well-meant warning, and if they received them cheerfully and remained true to them they have good reason to be glad of it in a happy eternity.

They have gone before us across the threshold of time into the realms of eternity. For them and for all those who have lived in the long ago, the church has been the place where they experienced in fullest measure the goodness and the mercy of God. It is there that they laid the ground-work of a life that was Christian and pleasing to God, yea, it is from those hallowed precincts that they drew all that finally brought them to eternal glory. And so for us too there is and can not be another place than the church. When they died they were brought once more to the church, and so we too in our turn, when we are dead, shall be brought to

the church for the last time. The church is for every Christian the gate of Heaven, the place where he shall find either eternal happiness or eternal damnation, according to the words of the old proverb: "He who hastens to church, hastens toward Heaven; he who goes slowly to church, goes slowly to Heaven; he who does not go to church, will not go to Heaven." We can readily comprehend the reason for this. It is in the church that Our Divine Saviour wishes to be surrounded by His own on earth, just as He is surrounded by the angels and the saints in Heaven. It is especially in church that He wishes to be loved, praised and adored; it is here that He extends His arms in blessing over us, that He makes us sharers in His merits and His graces, so that we may finally surround Him forever in Heaven, see Him, not merely under the appearance of bread, but face to face, so that we may celebrate an unending Sunday with Him, and continue with unalloyed joy with the angels and the saints to sing the eternal hymn of praise to the Triune God.

Thrice-blessed, therefore, the Christian to whom the church was a real home, who paid it frequent and devout visits, who let himself be blessed by his Divine Saviour, who often received the sacraments, who gladly listened to the word of God and who kept holy the Sunday. And when after death he is brought to the church for the last time for the purpose of receiving Christian burial, his soul will take a fond farewell from the church where he felt himself so much at home and contented: Fare thee well, O church, thou



gate of Heaven, thou image of the heavenly paradise, fare thee well! I shall pass over a better threshold, I shall enter the paradise of Heaven, the eternal house of God. Farewell, ye friendly altars where I have been so happy when assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, and whence I received such heavenly fruits! Farewell, thou communion table, where so often in childlike yearning I received the Body of my Saviour! Farewell, ye confessionals, where I have shed many bitter tears over my sins; O blessed tears, blessed contrition and confession, that obtained for me the mercy and the grace of God, fare ye well! Farewell, thou pulpit, from which I have received so many saving lessons and encouragement! Farewell, ye servants of the Lord, who meant it so well with me, may God reward you for your trouble! Fare ye well, my Christian brothers and sisters, who so often edified me by your devotion! Farewell, all ye beautiful feasts that I loved to celebrate in church. I am now going to celebrate an everlasting feast, forever will I rejoice with the angels and the saints, eternally will I abide with God my Saviour, for he who hastens to church, hastens toward Heaven.

5. But he who does not go to church will not go to Heaven. It is a sad thing to note that there is a large number of men and of women who no longer even know where their church is, of what the church reminds them, who never keep holy the Sunday and who seldom or never receive the sacraments. They too will be brought to the church at the end of their days. How will their poor soul feel when even the

church will rise in accusation against them? They will then cry out in pain and sorrow: Farewell thou hallowed abode of God's love and mercy that I contemned! Farewell, ye altars, tabernacle, and confessionals: O had I but a half hour's time to receive the sacraments, my eternal salvation would be secure! Farewell, ye good and faithful Christians, how happy I should be if I had followed your example, and had not looked upon you as fools and on myself as wise! Farewell paradise, thou heavenly elysium, thou everlasting house of God, thou realm of happiness, farewell, for I shall never see thee; another lot is mine, an abode of unending misery, for he who does not go to church will not go to Heaven.

May God grant, my dearly beloved, that you may always love to go to church, love to sanctify the Sundays and the holy-days. "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 121, 1). Moreover the house of God reminds us of the dignity of our own soul. St. Paul tells us that we are the temples and the abiding-place of the Holy Ghost. Our soul was solemnly consecrated by holy Baptism. The foundation of this temple is the virtue of faith which was infused into us in holy Baptism. The spire is hope, which raises us to God, the high altar is charity, and the sacrifice, pure, holy, and pleasing to God, that we are to offer up to Him, is our very self with body and soul, and we do so when we give ourselves to the service of God in joy and in pain. The pillars upon which this spiritual temple of God rests, are the Christian virtues; the

arch which extends over the temple of the soul, is the gracious Providence of God. And as long as we observe the commandments of God and of His Holy Church, as long as we remain in the state of grace and retain the innocence of our soul or have regained them by contrition and penance — so long are we the temples of the Holy Ghost and God will willingly abide in us. Then the celebration of the Sunday will also be a feast of the soul and the prototype of the everlasting Sunday, which we are called to celebrate in Heaven. Hence let us ever rejoice when we are told: “We shall go into the house of the Lord,” now on earth and one day in Heaven. Amen.

SERMON V

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH AND THE OBEDIENCE WHICH WE OWE TO THE CHURCH

“If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.”—MATT. 18, 17.

When Christ with emphatic words commended to His disciples the love of God and the love of Himself, He indicated to them at the same time the sign or mark whereby this true love should be recognized: “If you love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John 14, 15, 21). This sign of love towards Our Divine Saviour is, therefore, obedience to His commandments, for how could we observe His commandments if not by obedience to them? But what are His commandments? They are, besides the commandment of the love of God and of our neighbor, contained in the words which He spoke to His Apostles when He constituted them His representatives upon earth, and obligated the faithful to obey them: “He that heareth you heareth me, but he that despiseth you, despiseth him that sent me.” But how should we hear the Apostles with whom He promised to remain until the end of the world, how should we hear their successors, in a word, how should we hear the Church?

This is explained by the words which resounded from Heaven at the Transfiguration of Christ: "This is my well-beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." We hear Jesus Christ in His teaching and His commandments, if we obey Him; therefore, in like manner do we hear the Church in her teaching and commandments if we obey her. Whoever, therefore, obeys the Church, obeys Christ: "He that heareth you heareth me." Whoever does not obey the Church, does not obey Christ: yes, he does not even obey God the Father. But whoever does not obey God is a sinner, excludes himself from Heaven, and delivers himself over to the eternal judgment. Whoever, therefore, does not obey the Church, is a sinner, excludes himself from the communion of Christ and from Heaven, because he will not obey God in the Church.

This Christ the Son of God Himself said: "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." Heathens and public sinners have evidently no participation in God nor in His heavenly inheritance, and consequently those who will not hear the Church, have no share in the promises of Christ, because they have not the mark of love for Christianity and for Our Divine Saviour, since the first and greatest mark of love is obedience to the commandments of Christ, and among His commandments is a great commandment, namely, to obey the Church in her commandments.

The mark, therefore, of the true Christian is obedience to the Church in the observance of her commandments; disobedience to the Church and the non-observ-

ance of her commandments is the mark of a bad Christian. This is the subject of my discourse. Obedience to the Church shows love for Christ, and unites the Christian with Christ on earth and in Heaven; disobedience to the Church proves the lack of love for Christ, and separates one from Him on earth and also in Heaven.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. Why did God drive some of the angels out of Heaven and cast them into Hell? Because they would not obey Him. Disobedience, therefore, made devils out of angels. How glorious in love, and how holy of soul did not God create the first man? Adam knew not sickness, death and the manifold miseries of man, whilst he was in Paradise, and his soul was full of grace, full of innocence, and without passions, a true image and likeness of God. What then brought the multiplicity of diseases, death and the numberless kinds of misery and suffering into the world? What was it that awakened the passions of the soul, what caused the flood of sins, the loss of innocence, and consequently eternal death? What caused even the elements, the animal kingdom and the whole of nature to rise in rebellion against man? The sin of our first parents, because they would not obey God. Disobedience caused eternal death to be the lot of men, as well as many other evils of body and soul. Yet on the other hand we see the Son of God suffering on earth. Why did the Son of God become man, and why did He die on the Cross? He wanted not only to redeem

us from sin and the punishment due to sin, but also through that motive power of redemption, to effect that He should stand in direct opposition to him who had brought sin into the world. Sin was the result of disobedience, the Redemption was accomplished by obedience. Our first parents wanted to elevate themselves and to become like to God, and consequently to obey Him no longer; but the Son of God humiliated Himself, and became like the rest of men, sin alone excepted, and was obedient unto death, yes, even to the death of the Cross.

This obedience, therefore, my beloved, is not only the cause but much more the necessary condition of our reconciliation with God. By obedience not only should the consequences of the fall of our first parents from God be taken away, but above all that in which properly consisted the essence of the Fall, sin, namely, disobedience. Therefore St. Paul writes: "Wherefore as through the disobedience of one man many became sinners, so by the obedience of one many are made just." What follows from this? That the principal reason of our redemption is to be found not so much in the Cross of Jesus Christ as in the obedience wherewith He was obedient unto death, yes, even unto the death of the Cross. In like manner the sin of our first parents did not consist in the eating of the forbidden fruit, but in the fact that they thereby withdrew obedience from God, and fell away from Him. Even before they tasted of the fruit they were disobedient; the thought precedes the deed, and until the will reaches a decision neither hand nor mouth can

move itself to sin. So was it also in the case of Christ. Even before He was nailed to the Cross He was already obedient even to the death of the Cross. From the first instant of His life He was aware of His future death, and was prepared to suffer it because it was the will of His heavenly Father. For this reason the Royal Psalmist David places the words in His mouth: "Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire; but thou hast pierced ears for me . . . then said I, Behold I come! In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will, O God" (Ps. 39, 8). Obedient and subject was the Son of God to His blessed Mother Mary, to His foster-father St. Joseph. He showed His obedience to the Jewish Law by closely observing all its requirements, although He as the Giver of the Law was not bound to observe it. He was obedient in the Garden of Olives when He said: "Father, if it is possible let this chalice pass from me, yet not my will, but thine be done." He was obedient on the Cross when He said: "I thirst," in order that He should taste gall and vinegar, and thereby fulfill the Scriptures, which He had foretold.

2. What follows from this, my beloved! I beg your most particular attention to this point. The Catholic Church is not only a multitude of Christians, no, she is, according to the words of St. Paul, the body of Christ, whose Glorified Head is Christ the Redeemer. But if the Church is the body of Christ there must be a communion of graces, of gifts, of qualities and virtues, which are a necessary condition of the unity and harmony between the Head and the body, between

Christ and His Church. As, therefore, the obedience of Jesus Christ is seen throughout His whole life, and is the cause of our redemption, so too must obedience be in the whole Church and in each of her members the life-giving power and the condition which unites the Church with Christ, the individual member with his Redeemer, and makes the Church and her members participators in the Redemption. Moreover, Holy Scripture calls the Church the bride of Christ. The spiritual marriage of the Church with Christ, her Bridegroom, rests, as in the marriage between man and woman, in this, that He is her Protector and Defender, and that she is obedient to Him. For this reason Holy Church seeks to make all her children, the faithful, whom she has begotten through Baptism, obedient to her Divine Bridegroom. And since she is His representative on earth she seeks also to preserve them in obedience to herself. The former she does by her teaching, through the sacraments, divine service, and many other means which Our Divine Saviour has confided to her. The latter she accomplishes through her commandments.

If, therefore, the Church commands abstinence from flesh meat or fasting at certain times, she does this principally to practice us in obedience, and thereby to unite us with her and with her Head, Jesus Christ. If she imposes works of penance on us, she does so in order to atone for disobedience through obedience; if she obliges us to attend divine services, and prescribes for us the reception of the sacraments, she admonishes us thereby only more emphatically to show that obedi-

ence which we as her members owe to her Divine Head, and by obedience to lead us back to God the Father. Obedience is the demand of God; for this purpose God created man, that man should obey Him. Obedience goes through all Holy Scripture; in all warnings, in all promises given by God to man, obedience shines forth as the source of life and grace. We always hear the echo of the words: "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the Voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams."

3. As, therefore, Our Divine Saviour practised obedience, the Church teaches us obedience as our highest duty. She exhibits to us obedience as the fundamental condition or ornament of every virtue; she points to it as the only lasting bond between the child and the Father, between the redeemed and the Redeemer, between man and God. Obedience forms, as it were, the pulsation of His whole life. Among the members of religious orders obedience becomes through solemn vows one of the highest and holiest duties. The diocesan priest obligates himself to his Bishop by a solemn promise of obedience; the faithful promise obedience to the Church in Baptism. Obedience subjects the penitent to the confessor; it subjects our understanding to the decisions of Holy Church, the Pillar and Ground of Truth, and our wills to her commandments. Wherever you look in the Church, everything proclaims obedience. It is *the* solemn duty of all the children of the Church. For this reason

Pope St. Gregory calls it the bride of God, the ladder and the gate to Heaven. Can any one, therefore, love Christ who does not obey the Church? Impossible! It would be a contradiction in itself, because for this very reason Christ came down from Heaven, in order to lead us back to the practise of obedience. Precisely for this reason He instituted the Church, in order to teach us through her obedience, and to make us through her ministrations sharers in the fruits of the Redemption. Whoever, therefore, does not obey the Church, shows that he neither knows nor loves Christ. But whoever obeys her shows that he knows and loves Christ. With Christ and on account of Christ he is obedient, he is united with Christ through obedience, and now he will also participate in the Redemption. The fruits that flow from the virtue of obedience are truly glorious. Just as Christ, because He was obedient unto death, was elevated by His heavenly Father and "to Him was given a name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of those that are in Heaven, on earth and under the earth," so too the faithful become through obedience true children of the Church. Now they share in the bridal treasury of the Church, namely, in the merits of Christ, in the effects of the sacraments, in the grace of God and the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Now they become united through the Church with Christ, her Head, and form one holy family of God. Their paternal inheritance is the Kingdom of Heaven, and in Heaven obedience through the vision of God is changed into the most marvelous bliss. Yes, my beloved, these

are the consequences of obedience to the commandments of the Church, for whoever loves Christ will keep His commandments. Now the graces and the effects of redemption are realized in the Christian because he imitates Christ, is obedient with Him, and begins a new life after the example of the new Adam, the life of obedience. Thus he gains again paradise, the grace of God on earth, happiness in Heaven and the resurrection of the flesh unto imperishable glory.

4. But what are the consequences of disobedience to the commandments of the Church? Just as Adam by eating of the forbidden fruit rent asunder the bond that had hitherto united him to God, and with it lost grace, innocence, the immortality of the body and eternal happiness, so too disobedience to the Church brings with it the same fatal consequences. It is not, therefore, the eating of meat on forbidden days, to take an example, that constitutes the sin, but the declaration of disobedience, the imitation of the example of Adam whose place the disobedient Christian takes. The bond that should unite him to the Church he rends asunder. He is united with Christ only through the Church, therefore he separates himself from Christ by his disobedience. Only through Christ has he a bond of union with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, so that he falls away from this union and consequently from the heritage of Heaven, by his disobedience. For him Christ was in vain obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross. In vain He gave to him an example and strove to take away from him the con-

sequences of the sin of Adam, for he returns from Christ to the old Adam, from the Cross to the forbidden tree, from the illuminating heights of Golgatha into the dreary deserts of the Dead Sea. Or should this frivolous transgression of the mild commandments, such as those of the Church are, prove love for Christ? What does Our Divine Saviour Himself say? "If he will not hear the church let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." Has the heathen, has the public sinner love for Christ, a share in the treasures of grace of the Church, and in eternal happiness? Disobedience, therefore, to the Church proves the want of love for Christ, and separates the Christian from Him both in time and in eternity.

Could the Son of God have done more than to humiliate Himself to such a degree as to obey men, yes, even His enemies and torturers, in order to deliver us thereby from the consequences of the disobedience of our first parents? Is it not, therefore, the duty of the Christian to obey not the world, not his enemies, not his torturers, but rather his true mother, the Catholic Church; is it not his duty to obey her commandments in order to enter with Christ into a new union of man with God, and to become a new man, not according to the old Adam but according to Christ? Then he can say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." Whoever, therefore, rejects the Church by the transgression of her commandments rejects also his Saviour. He separates himself from a reunion with God and enters again the ranks of

those who have fallen away from God through disobedience. Can such a person still retain love for Christ? It is utterly impossible.

5. What is then the advantage, my beloved, of the frivolous transgression of such benign commandments? Or how can such Christians continue to criticize Adam and Eve, because they transgressed a command that might have been so easily obeyed, since they themselves, the descendants of Adam and Eve, instead of avoiding that same fault by the exercise of self restraint, do the same thing so frequently. Will they perhaps observe the commands of God all the more religiously for treading under foot the commandments of the Church? This is precisely the other reason why the Church, according to the ordinance of the Apostle, has given commandments, in order, namely, that we through their faithful observance, may be the more strengthened to observe the more difficult commandments of God. But whoever will not bear the light burden, will he show great joy in bearing the heavier one? Or, if he casts aside the commandments of the Church, will he show more zeal in observing the commandments of God? Most certainly not! He will cast these also aside whenever they happen to stand in the way of his enjoyment. Experience teaches us this sufficiently. Now there appears to me clearly another matter, namely, the irresponsible example of parents or superiors who lead their children or charges, yes, not only lead but compel them to transgress the laws of the Church. In Paradise we behold a serpent on the tree, which led Eve, and through her Adam, to disobedi-

ence to God, and through their disobedience brought upon mankind immeasurable woe; but upon themselves they brought the curse of God. And here we behold parents, here superiors, who lead their children and dependents, and in fact compel them to show disobedience to the laws of the Church. Must not such conduct bring also sad consequences for the future? Or will the children be all the more obedient to God in after years, or to the Church, or even to their own parents? Will they not much rather be led by such bad example to transgress other commandments later on, and that with just as little excuse, to despise all higher esteem, and to distinguish themselves by spiteful disobedience? In this matter experience speaks, and this experience each one can have. But what does Our Divine Saviour say? "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believes in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged around his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea." These sins with all their consequences cry to Heaven against the transgressor or the seducer, for God did not entrust these souls to their care that they should lead them on the way of disobedience, but that they should be led along the way pointed out by Christ, Who can lead us back through obedience to God, and save us from temporal and eternal perdition.

6. But the objection is raised: I did not realize that the commandments of the Church were of such great importance. That may well be. But did you not know, first, that there are commandments of the

Church; secondly, that we are obliged to obey the Church? That is sufficient, and must be sufficient for you, to move you to obey the commandments of the Church. The fourth commandment of God is: *Honor thy father and thy mother*. These words embrace not only parents but also all spiritual and temporal superiors. Whoever, therefore, does not obey the Church does not obey the fourth commandment of God, but commits a grievous sin by disobedience, and that you must have known. It does not matter whether we understand the reason or meaning of a commandment or not, but it is of vital importance whether we observe a commandment or not, and we shall not be judged about the former point by God, but about the latter. If we wish, therefore, to be freed from the consequences of sin, if we do not wish to share in the disobedience of our first parents and its consequences, we must obey God and the Church, as Christ through His obedience has shown us that it is the first and most necessary thing for salvation. Without this obedience we shall share here on earth in the lot of our first parents and in the life to come in the lot of the fallen angels, just as through our obedience we are united with Christ on earth, and shall be united with Him eternally in Heaven. Therefore, do not permit yourselves to be restrained from observing the commandments of the Church by those infamous men who scoff at the Church and ridicule her commandments. The scoffers will not defend you before the judgment seat of God, but your obedience to God and to His Holy Church, which He instituted on earth to show us the

way to salvation. Therefore, I conclude with the words of St. Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief, for this is not expedient for you . . . and may the God of peace . . . fit you in all goodness that you may do his will; doing in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory for ever and ever" (13, 17, 21). Amen.

SERMON VI

THE ANTIQUITY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAW OF FASTING

“But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.”—GEN. 2, 17.

There are many nowadays who either regard the commandment of God forbidding Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge in Paradise as singular, if not ridiculous, or at least who profess to be unable to understand or explain the punishment inflicted by God for its transgression. And yet it was not the mere eating of the forbidden fruit that constituted the grievous offense against God, and brought all the punishment and evil upon Adam and the whole human race, but it was much rather the disobedience of Adam in transgressing the commandment of God, the rising up of the created will of man in rebellion against the uncreated will of God. Eve did not commit the greater sin, but Adam, who as head of the human race consented to her disobedience and completed it by his act. The easier the commandment was, the greater the grace, the more marvelous Paradise, the greater the knowledge of Adam, the more he was lord of all creatures, and all obeyed him, and the more free that he felt from all the cares of providing for himself, the

more too was he obligated to obedience, and the greater was his sin. He had only to observe this one commandment in order to constantly show to God his gratitude and love, and consequently his obedience, and thus preserve both for himself and his posterity grace, paradise, and immortality of the body. Adam became disobedient, and this disobedience was such a great sin that it was a true deflection from God and from God's law. What Adam lost in consequence of his disobedience, innocence, paradise, the immortality of the body, that he could not regain for his posterity, any more than a father can bequeath to his children a fortune which he has squandered.

For this reason Our Divine Saviour became obedient unto the death of the Cross, in order to make good the disobedience of the first Adam regarding the tree in paradise, and to redeem us from original sin and our own personal sins. We too, my beloved, must become obedient on the tree of the Cross in order to make good the disobedience of our first parents through our obedience, and thus share in the Redemption. For this reason all Catholic Christians have the same commandment as Adam in Paradise. We should not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in order that we may not in consequence of our disobedience die the eternal death. For us the fruit of the tree is meat, consequently we must especially abstain from eating meat on Friday, because on a Friday Our Divine Saviour became obedient on the tree of the Cross, and suffered for us in His holy Flesh. We must also be obedient in order that we

may merit redemption and the heavenly paradise, and preserve them. Therefore, the commandment of God to Adam applies also to us: "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." The Cross is this tree of knowledge. There we learn the goodness of redemption and of grace, of obedience and a Christian life, but also the evil of sin, of unbelief and of disobedience.

The Catholic Church in the name, and as the representative of Our Divine Saviour, repeats the commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree in these words: "Thou shalt observe the days of fast commanded." We must be obedient with Our Divine Saviour, the Second Adam, in order that through our obedience on the tree of the Cross we may make good the disobedience of the first Adam, and merit for ourselves redemption and the heavenly paradise. I shall therefore speak to-day on the law of fasting, its significance and its antiquity.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. The first law of fasting that we know of, my beloved, is as old as the human race itself. God gave in Paradise the commandment to our first parents, to abstain from the fruit of the tree, in order that they might subject their will to the will of God, and learn to tame their desires. What unfortunate consequences the transgression of this commandment had, you know, for they were immediately driven out of Paradise, and death, sickness, sin and all kinds of mis-

eries came upon them and their posterity. Because, therefore, our first parents through their disobedience brought sin into the world, their posterity by their obedience are to make satisfaction for the sin of Adam. For this reason God Himself ordained for the Jewish people after their exodus from Egypt a yearly universal fast day, the great Day of Atonement (Gen, 23). But if the people fell away from the ordinance of God, or a great misfortune threatened them, they were accustomed to observe also other fast days with a view to escaping the punishment of God. Thus Samuel spoke to the people when they were conquered by their enemies: "If you will return with your whole heart to the Lord, he will save you," and the people confessed aloud: "We have sinned against the Lord," and they fasted the whole day. When the prophet Jonas, by command of God, announced to the Ninevites their impending destruction, the king instituted a day of penance and fast, and the inhabitants great and small clothed themselves in the garb of mourning, sprinkled ashes on their heads and fasted (Jonas 3, 7, 8, 9). "And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil ways; and God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had said that he would do to them, and he did it not." In like manner Esther took her refuge to fasting when the Jewish people were condemned to destruction by their enemies. She said to her father Mardocheus: "Go and gather together all the Jews whom thou shalt find in Susan, and pray ye for me. Neither eat nor drink for three days and three nights" (Esther 4, 16). But the Jew-

ish people had other fast days to remind them of great misfortunes, of the Babylonian captivity, or of the destruction of the first temple. The prophet Joel describes this for us most vividly: "For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible: and who can stand it? Now, therefore, saith the Lord: be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. . . . Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather together the people, sanctify the church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones and them that suck at the breast; let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of her chamber. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep, and shall say: spare, O Lord, spare thy people: and give not thy inheritance to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them" (Joel 2, 13-18). But not only did the whole Jewish people frequently fast, but also individual holy men. Moses fasted on the mountain for forty days and forty nights; the great prophet Elias also fasted forty days and forty nights. David secluded himself and rigorously fasted when the prophet Nathan admonished him to do penance. Sara, Judith, Esther observed fasts, and we read of Anna, the octogenarian widow, that she served the Lord with prayer and fasting day and night. Who has not heard of the strict fast of St. John the Baptist?

2. Thus it was until the time of the coming of Our Saviour, and what do we read of Him when He was about to enter upon His public life? He went into the desert and fasted forty days and forty nights.

Thus by His example He sanctified the fasting of the Old Testament, and at the same time set for us an example. "For I have also given you an example, that as I have done to you, so do you also" (John 13, 15). The Apostles followed this example, for "the days will come," Our Divine Saviour said, "when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then in those days they shall fast" (Luke 5, 35). What the Apostles did, the first Christians imitated, for all were, as Holy Scripture says, of one heart and one soul. They did not indeed have a special commandment to fast as we now have. Yet it is highly probable that even in the Apostolic times the Lenten fast was observed, as mentioned by St. Irenaeus in the second century. The ordinance for the forty days' fast is ascribed to the holy Pope Telesphorus, one hundred seventeen years after the birth of Christ. In the third century the fast was commanded, and it has been so continued down to our own day, but with the important difference that the fasting now is very mild, whereas in former times it was very strict. The law of fasting is, therefore, holy and venerable through the example of Jesus Christ, holy and venerable through its age, its universality, and the duty for each Christian to observe it conscientiously. The great Father of the Church St. Basil, in the fourth century, beautifully says: "There is no land, no island, no city, no nation, no part of the earth where the law of fasting has not been proclaimed." Whole armies, travellers, sailors, merchants, hear it announced, though they be far away from their fatherland, and esteem themselves

happy on that account. Therefore, let no one believe that he is not obliged to fast. The angels inscribe in the Book of Life the names of those who observe this commandment. Be careful that no angel inscribe your name as that of one who does not fast, and do not abandon the banner of your religion. . . . Would it not be a disgrace, that a yoke should be esteemed too oppressive, to which the whole Church with joy subjects herself! O my beloved, how many there are to-day who abandon the banner of their religion, and look upon this commandment as a yoke so oppressive that they strive to deliver themselves from it? How many scoff at this venerable custom and despise those who observe it, and strive in every way to compel them not to observe it! Yes, it has gone so far that some are even willing to be looked upon in public places as Jews or pagans rather than as Catholic Christians! Should that be thought a piece of stupidity which has for centuries been a universal custom, not only among the Israelites, but even among the pagans; that which God Himself has commanded, which holy men have practised, which Jesus Christ has sanctified by His own example, and which the whole of Christendom has observed up to the present time, and which Holy Church has raised to the position of a command? Should Christ the Lord, should God Himself have erred, and should the contemners of everything holy, of everything venerable through age, custom and law, alone be right?

3. Let us now consider the marvelous effects of fasting, and the wisdom shown by the Church in her

law of fasting. Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius, one of the greatest Bishops of the sixteenth century, who as the legate of Pope Pius V opened the Council of Trent, when he was asked by his friends to spare himself from his rigorous fasting, said: "Precisely in order that I may live long, I observe the prescribed fasts exactly, for the fourth commandment says, Honor thy father and thy mother that thou mayest live long upon the earth. My father is God in Heaven, and my mother on earth is Holy Church. Now God my Father commands me to subjugate my sensuality, that is, to fast; and the Church, my mother, prescribes for me the days on which I should fast. I willingly obey both, and I hope that in view of my obedience I shall live a long life, yes and even obtain the eternal perfect and happy life of Heaven." In these words of the great Bishop and Cardinal we find expressed the great benefit which the punctual and faithful observance of fasting has for body and soul; obedience to God, atonement for past sins, subjection of the passions, strengthening of the virtues and health of body.

The first and most necessary duty that the Christian owes to God is the duty of obedience. For this reason those men are sinners who fail to obey God; and they will be eternally punished because they have persevered in their disobedience. How many conflicts both from within and from without, how many base enticements does the Christian not have to overcome, in order to remain obedient to the commandments of God? In a thousand ways and in most enticing forms temptations assault him, now in this respect, now in that, in

order to lead him into acts of disobedience against God. In view of this how thankful should he not be to God if he has a means whereby to practise obedience, and to strengthen himself against all enticements to illicit pleasures. This means the Church has given to us in her law of fasting. Yes, my beloved, by means of this commandment we should learn to practise obedience, to submit our will, which is the cause of our every sin. He who has not learned to restrain his own will, must surely become the sport of every temptation to evil. But when we have learned to give our obedience to the laws of the Church, we shall attain the necessary courage and strength to make the fulfillment of the commandments of God much more easy. Wherefore Holy Scripture says: "Obedience is better than sacrifice" (1 Kings 15, 22), since by our obedience we make a sacrifice to God of our own selves, of our will and our inclinations.

In fasting, therefore, it is not merely the abstinence from food that must be observed, but more especially the practise of obedience, and whoever breaks the fast does not commit a sin precisely because of his act of breaking the fast, because he has eaten more than was allowed, but he commits sin on account of his evil disposition and bad will, on account of his disobedience. The sin of our first parents in Paradise consisted also in the eating of the forbidden fruit, but precisely because this food was forbidden, and because through the eating of it they refused obedience to God, they sinned so grievously. The Church has therefore wisely provided that we should be trained through

this commandment of fasting to obedience to God, for if we observe this commandment we shall also more easily obey the commandments of God. Experience teaches us in thousands of examples that whoever faithfully observes the commandments of the Church, usually also observes faithfully the commandments of God. Hence the observance of the law of fasting is a glorious sacrifice of obedience which the Christian offers to God. He is mindful of the words of Christ: "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican" (Matt. 18, 17). The thought to practise self-denial in the presence of God and to obey His heavenly Father makes abstinence mild and easy. With joy the Catholic will give a part of the gifts which we daily receive from the bountiful hand of God as a sacrifice to Him. Consider a Christian who obeys in all things his holy Mother, the Catholic Church, whether he will not also be an obedient child of His heavenly Father. Certainly! But behold all those who place themselves above the commandments of the Church, and you will find that their life in all other things is as a rule very unchristian.

To atone for sin and to keep from us the scourge of Divine Justice, this is the other reason for fasting. Every sin must be punished, either in this world or in the world to come; in this world through the penance done by the sinner, or in the next world by the avenging God. Let us, therefore, my beloved, thank Holy Church for compelling us by her law of fasting to practise rigorous penance, for if she left it to each

one of the faithful, her children would subject themselves to a minimum of penance, and therefore be obliged to suffer so much more in the world to come. And in fact if we reflect upon it rightly, what has Our Divine Saviour suffered for us out of pure love, what pains, what misery did He not take upon Himself for our sakes! And now we should hesitate to do penance, and to be obedient with Our Divine Saviour? The true Christian is so animated with this thought that he will gladly undergo self-denial with Christ. For suffering is now the consequence of sin, suffering either here on earth or in the world to come. The body is the instrument of sin; it completes the sin which the heart has committed, and through its inclinations, desires and passions leads the heart to sin. Accordingly it is meet and proper that the body also should do penance by self-abnegation, and in this way be made, as it were, incapable of sin. For this reason Our Divine Saviour Himself says: "He that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it" (Matt. 16). Whoever therefore wishes to save the life of his body will lose the life of his soul. To wish to save the life of the body means, therefore, to satisfy all his passions, and consequently there will follow the loss of the soul. To wish to save the soul means to mortify the body. This we do through fasting, and consequently through obedience to the commandments of the Church.

4. Have I recounted everything that might be said concerning the significance of fasting? Indeed no, not even the half of it. Could I but describe the sig-

nificance of it in the light in which it really should be seen, truly, my beloved, you would not then consider the law of fasting as a disagreeable institution which one may try his best to be excused from fulfilling; you would in fact love it, esteem it highly and observe it faithfully. Who does not earnestly desire to protect himself from falling into sin, and to adorn himself with virtue? But fasting is a powerful aid to us in the accomplishment of this aim. "I beseech you therefore, brethren," says St. Paul in the twelfth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, "I beseech you by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God."

We should not, therefore, offer to God animals as a sacrifice, after the manner of the Jews in former times, but we should offer ourselves, our bodies. But the sacrifice of the body consists in the subjugation of its desires and passions. It is a living sacrifice through the uninterrupted mortification of the body, in order that the soul may be formed to a new life, to the life of grace. It is a holy sacrifice, for by the subjection of the sensual nature our bodies are purified. It is a sacrifice pleasing to God, that consists in an humble and contrite heart, and this is attained through the mortification of the flesh. And fasting helps us to do this. For this reason Holy Church wisely chose the spring fast, for with this period begins the renewal of life in nature.

In everything that grows we discern a certain process of agitation and fermentation. And in men we discover something analogous. Man needs in particu-

lar a strong curb, in order that his passions may not become too strong, and overpower the soul and its good resolutions. Effeminacy in the care of the body, and over-indulgence in food and drink, are just as harmful to the body as too much sap is to the tree. "If the body is corrupted, the soul is also oppressed," says Holy Scripture. But just as a tree, if the lower limbs are trimmed carefully, grows and shoots upwards, farther and farther from the earth, so also does the soul of man rise above the desires of the body, raising itself indeed to God. It thinks and acts much more freely and easily, and rises far above all that is earthly to God. The great Doctor of the Church St. Augustine says: "Fasting purifies the heart, clarifies the understanding, strengthens the will, curbs the desires of the flesh, extinguishes the fires of the lower passions, causes the bright light of chastity to burn." "It is a messenger of peace to our souls," says St. John Chrysostom, "the ornament of old age, the teacher and disciplinarian of youth, the instructor of the temperate, the diadem and crown of every age and sex." It is true, my beloved, fasting does require some sacrifice on our part, but sobriety and temperance also presuppose some sacrifice. There is no virtue without sacrifice. Love of one's enemies, generosity, truthfulness, patience and meekness, chastity, are all evidences of continual sacrifice. And just as the farmer grows to love the field which he has worked in the sweat of his brow, or the warrior the war which has cost him his blood or bodily members, so too the Christian grows to love those virtues which have cost him great sacri-

rice. But whosoever shuns sacrifice, never acquires virtue, and does not deserve to acquire it. Wherefore Our Divine Saviour says: "Whosoever will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Fasting demands sacrifice, namely, the abstinence from the usual amount of food, or the abstinence from flesh meat, and preserves the Christian who makes this sacrifice from many temptations to sin, and adorns him with the virtues of obedience, of moderation, of chastity and patience. More zealous and more devout will be his prayers, and more abundant the grace of God. Like a kind mother the Catholic Church assists her children and gives to their weakness a wholesome restraint. Her law of fasting is a preservative from sin and a protection to virtue. A glorious harmony exists between the ordinance of fasting and springtime. Everything lives and moves in nature, everything becomes green, blossoms and blooms, and takes on the freshness of new life. So too should all Christians through the season of fasting flourish and blossom forth with the freshness of new life, and their souls should be rendered more beautiful. The time of fasting is a time in which Holy Church cleanses all her faithful children in the bath of penance in order that they may gain life or new strength. At Easter time Holy Communion should complete the bond of fidelity. Here is the Bread of Angels, the Heavenly Manna, which purifies and sanctifies the Christian, but which must be merited by earnest endeavor in obedience to God and His Church.

The law of fasting and the abstinence from flesh

meat on Fridays of the year, therefore, show the Christian in his greatness and dignity. With Our Divine Saviour he is obedient regarding the tree of the second paradise, obedient to the Catholic Church, and with Our Divine Saviour he performs, through his obedience, satisfaction and atonement for the sin of Adam in the first paradise. The Cross is the tree of knowledge of good and evil for us. Through our obedience to the law of fasting imposed upon us by the Church, we learn to know the goodness and the wonderful greatness of the Redemption, and of the grace of God, and eschew the evil of disobedience from a just fear to suffer the lot and punishment of Adam, and to lose paradise and grace. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat," thus sounds throughout the world the commandment of fasting imposed on us by the Church, and Heaven and earth are called upon to witness who among the Christians of the world are disobedient after the manner of the first Adam, and who are obedient like Christ, who will to gain the heavenly paradise and happiness, and who desire or are willing to lose them.

Our choice is not difficult. The serpent should not tempt us to fall away from God and His Church, not entice us to disobedience. For the sake of the price of miserable food we will not like Adam squander grace and redemption, or like Esau our inheritance as the children of God. Obedience to the Church is a glorious sacrifice, a touching proof of faith and hope and love, of gratitude for the bitter Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, and of true zeal to merit and preserve

for oneself the grace of God and eternal happiness. May this obedience also animate us and adorn our lives here on earth, in order that it may bring to us the glory of eternal life, and lead us into the heavenly paradise and the communion with Jesus Christ and all His saints. Amen.

SERMON VII

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LENTEN FAST

“Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”—2 COR. 6, 2.

The gospel for the first Sunday of Lent shows us Our Divine Saviour in the desert, where He fasted for forty days and forty nights, fought against the temptations of Satan and cried out to all Christians: “I have given you an example, that as I have done so you do also” (John 13, 15). The Redeemer in the desert, fasting, struggling, conquering the attacks of Satan! Was it possible for the Church to have chosen a more appropriate gospel for the beginning of this earnest and important time than the one which she presents for our consideration to-day? The Church also goes, as it were, into the desert during Lent. Her joyful festivals as Christmas, the Transfiguration of our Lord, Candlemas Day, are all past, and now the Church assumes a more somber color of penance and sadness. On the eve of the first Sunday of Lent the priests, since the sixth century, intone in the name of the Church in the Vespers the hymn of St. Gregory the great: “Hear, O merciful Creator, the tearful prayers we present to thee, during these forty days of fast. O loving Searcher of the heart, thou knowest

that our strength is weak: grant us the grace of our pardon, for we are converted unto thee. Greivously have we sinned; yet, spare us, for we confess our sins to thee: and for the glory of thy name, heal our languid hearts. Grant that we may subdue our flesh by abstinence; that thus our hearts may leave what nourishes sin, and fast from every crime. O Blessed Trinity, O Undivided Unity, grant to us Thy servants, that our fast may produce abundant fruits."

But this spirit of the Church goes back to Apostolic times, in fact the Apostles were convinced of the truth which is evident on every page of Holy Scripture, that sin must be punished in this world or in the world to come; in this world through penitence or in the next through the vengeance of God, and that the more the sinner spares himself, the stricter will be the judgment of God, and that the more rigorously the sinner judges himself here below, the more will God spare him, according to the words of the Apostle: "Judge yourselves now, in order that you may not be judged." For this reason the same Apostle, St. Paul, emphatically cries out to the faithful: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The Catholic Church also makes use of these words in the beginning of the holy season of Lent, and she warns not in vain, for from the earliest times the Christians voluntarily did public penance in these days of salvation and grace. As a sign of their penitential spirit they dressed themselves in penitential garb, and after the example of the patriarchs, prophets and kings of old, sprinkled ashes on their heads, or requested the

priest to do so for them on Ash Wednesday. And truly, there is no more impressive representation of the deep misery of mankind and of the interior agony of the soul for the practise of penance, and no more impressive consecration of the season of Lent than the scattering of ashes on the heads of the faithful. I shall, therefore, speak to-day of the forty days' fast of Lent, and particularly of its meaning.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. Since Adam and Eve transgressed the commandment of God in Paradise, and through this transgression brought upon themselves the punishment of God, we find among the Jewish people, yes, even among the pagan nations, the feeling deeply impressed on their souls, whereby they have always striven to reconcile themselves with the offended Deity through mortification of the body, through many corporal works of penance, but especially through fasting, so that we can and must say that fasting has been, from the time of Adam, throughout the centuries the most general and emphatic expression of sorrow for past misdeeds, and the most powerful weapon whereby to ward off the judgment and punishment of God. The whole history of the Jewish nation in the Old Testament tells of this fact. God spoke to Moses, when the Jewish people made for themselves a golden calf which they adored: "Let me alone that I may destroy them, and abolish their name from under heaven, and set thee over a nation, that is greater and stronger than this" (Deut. 9, 14). But what did Moses do? Be aston-

ished at the power of fasting! Moses narrates it himself: "And I fell down before the Lord as before, forty days and nights, neither eating bread, or drinking water, for all your sins, which you had committed against the Lord, and had provoked him to wrath. . . . And the Lord heard me this time also" (Deut. 9, 18).

But what Moses did, that also the prophets, the leaders and kings and the whole Jewish nation were accustomed to do during all the years. They fasted especially in times of misfortune or visitation. What was the reason of their strict fasting? Penance for past sins, in order to escape by this sign of penance and of voluntary self-punishment, the menacing punishment of God. This was the underlying thought whilst the thunder of heaven rolled over them and filled their souls with the consciousness of guilt, and with fear and trembling. The prophet Joel tells of this when he exclaims: "Ah, ah, ah, for the day: because the day of the Lord is at hand, and it shall come like destruction from the mighty . . . a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and whirlwinds: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can stand it?" Therefore the Lord said: "Be converted to me with all your hearts, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil" (Joel 1, 15; 2, 2, 11-13).

Did then, my beloved, fasting cease with the coming

of the Saviour and with the Redemption? By no means. Just as St. John the Baptist shortly before the time of Christ gave the last consecration to the fasts of the Jews by his own fasting, Christ began His public life by fasting in the desert. By His fasting He consecrates the fasting of Christians, He sanctifies and confirms it, and introduces it into the Church for His followers. "I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also." And in fact we see the Apostles as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, begin every important work with prayer and fasting. What the first Christians beheld in the Apostles and Bishops, they imitated with holy zeal, for "all were of one heart and one soul!" For this reason the holy Bishop Irenaeus, who lived about one hundred and fifty years after Christ, speaks of the Easter fast of the Christians: in the year 250 we find this fast ordained by decree of the Church. During this Paschal Season of fasting the Christians ate only once a day, at about three o'clock in the afternoon or after sunset. Neither meat was eaten nor wine drunk, usually only bread with salt and plain vegetables. The fasting during Holy Week was particularly strict, when many went two or three days without food, as St. Epiphanius tells us. Some ate nothing during Holy Week, until the dawn of the following Sunday, and almost all abstained from all food on Good Friday. For this reason Tertullian in the second century designates the Christians as men gaunt from fasting. Only in the sixteenth century were the faithful who were of weak constitution allowed a little wine; in the seventeenth

century for the northern countries, where scarcely any vegetables are to be had, farinaceous food and eggs were allowed; in the nineteenth century for those who had to perform hard labor there was allowed in addition to the one full meal also a small measure of wine and bread. And there still stand in many cities splendid churches which were built by the pious contributions of the faithful of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a return for the permission to be allowed to use butter during the season of Lent.

2. From Apostolic times through the course of many centuries, this fast was only the expression of a sincere penitential spirit. Many voluntarily took upon themselves public penance, until the Church chose the first day of fasting for this purpose, to impose upon those a public penance, who, after public scandal or other grievous sins, were to be reconciled to the Church, that is, received again into the communion of the faithful for the Easter Festival. The penitents began with confession. Then they showed themselves in the church, barefooted and garbed in mourning. Before the Bishop came they prayed with bowed head, with tearful eyes, with all the signs of sincere contrition, humbly, to be permitted to perform public penance and to receive public absolution. Touched by their entreaties the Bishop scattered ashes on their heads, sprinkled them with Holy Water, and prostrate on the ground, prayed aloud with the clergy, the seven Penitential Psalms. After the prayers had been finished they arose, the Bishop laid his hand upon them to confirm them in their repentance, and addressed

them with an earnest exhortation in which he told them that as God had driven Adam out of Paradise on account of his sin, he too must exclude them for a period from the church, and at the same time he admonished them to have courage and to hope in the mercy of God. Now the procession began. Garbed in mourning, their heads sprinkled with ashes, slowly and silently they passed through the church, whilst the words were solemnly sung which God addressed to Adam when He drove him out of Paradise after his sin: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread until thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken" (Gen. 3, 19). Arrived at the door of the church the Bishop bade them to depart, but on Maundy Thursday they were allowed to enter again and to receive Holy Communion. Likewise the other faithful who had not taken part in this public penance, took the ashes at least, in order to show that they too were filled with the spirit of penitence.

This custom of blessing and distributing the ashes is still in vogue in the Church. There resounds in the deepest depths of the soul of every Christian the words: "Remember man that thou art dust, and to dust thou must return!" Yes, indeed, these words penetrate to the very depths of the soul, for they show the spirit of fasting and of penance that is necessary in every Christian. Indeed, in the background, all Christians from the times of the Apostles down to the present day, saw, there in the background they beheld, and we also behold, the Lamb of God, shedding His Blood on the Cross, the Saviour dying from the

pain and intensity of His sufferings and thirst! And what is the reason that this most holy and most lovable Redeemer suffers, bleeds, dies? The prophet Isaias, yet not he alone, but even our own conscience tells us: "But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed" (Isaias 53, 5). The eyes of all true Christians during these forty days are directed to this bloody, painful Sacrifice which looms up in the background.

And now I understand the reason for the institution of the Lenten fast. No, indeed, true Christians cannot bear to see their Redeemer suffering for their sins without suffering with Him; they cannot bear to see Him doing penance for their sins without their doing penance themselves! They cannot bear to, because it is the Son of God Eternal; it is Innocence Itself that suffers there for them, and so with all the greater import are the words borne to them: "Remember man that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return!" And if this takes place in the green wood, what will happen in the dry? Hasten to unite your penance and self-denial with the Bloody Sacrifice of your Saviour on the Cross, that you may become thereby a sharer in the fruits of His Sacrifice, and in the mercy and redemption of God.

Herein lies the reason, my beloved, why the Church has instituted these days of penance and fasting, in order that her desire may be fulfilled that all the faithful whose salvation is so dear to her heart may really participate in the Redemption. For this reason the

Catholic Church seeks as much as she can, to lead all to the suffering Saviour by the path of penance and fasting, and to unite them with Him in these days of salvation, in order that all may with their Head, Jesus Christ, at the same time offer a great, a wonderful sacrifice of atonement to God the Father, for the remission of their sins, and that all may obtain grace and reconciliation with God. The words of the Apostle strike home to the heart of the Christian: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service" (Rom. 12, 1). Your body, he says — as it were — is only then a sacrifice if its desires are denied, but this mortification of self takes place by abstinence from food, by fasting. Through fasting, therefore, you make of your bodily desires a sacrifice, and unite this sacrifice with that of the Lord, into one, holy, living sacrifice that shall be pleasing to God. Thus only will your service of God become a reasonable service. Faith, hope and charity are the foundation of the true service of God. But whoever believes without works, whoever hopes without coöperating with the Redemption, and whoever loves, without observing the commandments of God and the Church, his service of God is an unreasonable one. Whoever, therefore, hopes to participate in the sufferings of the Redeemer without wishing to suffer with Him, hopes unreasonably. Or, what does Christ, Our Saviour and Redeemer, say? "And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10, 38).

But whoever is not a disciple of Our Divine Saviour cannot share in the Redemption. Or how could his service of God be a reasonable one?

For this reason the picture of Our Saviour fasting in the desert is most impressive, and the sight of the penitent Saviour on the Cross penetrates the soul of the Christian: "I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also." Forward, then, exclaims the Apostle; forward, then, admonishes the Church; forward, encourage all true Christians throughout the centuries; let us unite ourselves with the fasting, with the suffering Saviour, let us unite our fasting and penance with His, in order to bring to God, the Just Judge, a sacrifice of complete atonement. But whoever separates himself from the suffering Saviour, whoever separates himself from His fasting and penitent faithful, whoever absolves himself from the duty of obedience to the commands of the Church, separates himself also from redemption. And what will become of the dry wood? "Remember O man that thou art dust, and unto dust thou must return." Then will follow the judgment.

3. Truly a sublime picture of the Church in these days of grace! She lengthens her prayers and sighs; ceaselessly she prays for the conversion of sinners, and clothes herself in the somber color of mourning and penance. She unites the fasting and penance of her faithful children, the solitude of so many holy Christians, and the rigorous practises of penance on the part of so many innocent souls, into one whole, and unites them with the fasting and suffering of her Di-

vine Head, into one sacrifice of atonement of infinite value, that reaches to the very throne of God, not in order to call down upon a sinful world the just punishments of God, but to avert it, to ward it off, and to obtain His mercy. Thus the life of Jesus Christ is constantly renewed in His Church and in the lives of His faithful followers, and even the fasting which is done by the lowliest Christian, attains a most extraordinary atoning value in the eyes of the heavenly Father.

Now, my beloved, we understand the words of Christ: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." We hear the Church not only in her teaching but also in her commandments. Whoever, therefore, will not hear her commandments ceases to be obedient to her. But whoever has denied obedience to the Church separates himself from her. And whoever thus separates himself, separates himself from Christ, for Christ is the Head, and the Church is His Body. But whoever separates himself from Christ, places himself in the ranks of public sinners and heathens. But here we meet the objection: How is it possible for the sake of a morsel more or less of food, for the sake of this or that variety of food, that we should be separated from Christ? With such words is the commandment of abstinence and fasting decried nowadays as a useless and childish ordinance, and is consequently rejected by many. Yet here we see the words of the Apostle fulfilled in a threefold manner: "Because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified him as God,

or given thanks; but they became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1, 21).

In fact, is it not the same God in all His Majesty Who forbade Cain to shed innocent blood, and Who forbade Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree, in order that both might observe the obedience due to their Creator and Benefactor? Is it not the same God Whose terrible punishment was visited upon the disobedience of the one, and the disobedience of the other? Or is God on that account greater or less, because He prescribed to the one this commandment, and to the other that? Is it not the same God Who wills that we shall observe His commandments, and Who wills that we should obey the laws of His Church? It is, therefore, my beloved, not a question of what God demands of us, but it is a question of our obedience to His commandments. Through obedience man glorifies God, his Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Whoever, therefore, traffics with God with regard to the subject of obedience, does not glorify God. But the Apostle adds: "They became vain in their thoughts." How truly are these words fulfilled in them! In order the more freely and unscrupulously to be able to transgress the law of the Church, they pose as being above the law, and speak of it as of a matter of little consequence.

But what is this but to strive to abolish the most venerable traditions of the Church, and the oldest and most venerable customs of Christianity? What else does this course of action mean than that they are placing their judgment above the judgment of the Apostles

and of the whole Church, and are making their judgment superior to that of all the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and of all loyal Christians; yes, that they are striving to overthrow a custom that has been approved, sanctified and practised by Moses, by the prophets, and even by Our Divine Saviour Himself; that they would make it a matter entirely dependent on their own good will? For this reason the Apostle says: "They became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened."

From this truly results a sad consequence, namely, that man wishes to constitute himself as judge of the ordinances of Our Divine Saviour, or of His Church, which is ruled and guided by the Holy Ghost. This sad consequence is plainly recognized precisely in the contempt exhibited for the law of fasting. Men look only to the external part of this commandment, upon the eating of a greater or less quantity of food, or this or that kind of food, but they do not know the spirit of the commandment. And yet the spirit of this command is the soul of Christianity and the Redemption, for it is the spirit of obedience, the spirit of Jesus Christ, in opposition to the disobedience of Adam and to the spirit of Satan.

4. Truly, my beloved, a morsel of food more or less, a piece of meat on Friday, is of itself an unimportant matter. But the sentiment which is herein exhibited, the obedience or disobedience which it involves, is of great importance, and even decides the possession of happiness in eternity. Holy Scripture says in concise words: "And yet their meat was in their mouth, and

the wrath of God came upon them" (Ps. 77, 30). With this forbidden food in their mouth they have refused obedience to the Saviour as did Adam in Paradise. Whereas the Son of God on their account was obedient unto death, yes, even to the death of the Cross, they become disobedient just in the season of Lent. Therefore, precisely at the time when God shows His love the most, when He did not even spare His only-begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us, precisely at that time it is that many show their thanklessness most openly. Just at the time when loyal Christians are pressing around the Cross, and are showing to Our Divine Saviour their love and gratitude, these disobedient children of the Church separate themselves from her. Hear the words of Our Divine Saviour: "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican."

Therefore, let us unite ourselves in this holy season with Our Divine Saviour through obedience. Fasting as it now exists is really very mild, nothing at all in comparison with the rigorous fast of former days. Then there was only one meal allowed, and no flesh meat or special lenten foods, but now even this is mostly permitted. Remember that it was precisely the strict fasting of the earlier Christians that produced so many thousands of holy souls, temples of the Holy Ghost, conquerors of the devil and of sin, martyrs and confessors of the faith. They now follow the Lamb of God in Heaven whithersoever He goeth, because they imitated Him on earth in His obedience. But be mindful also, that, according to the words of

Christ: "If he will not hear the Church," the voluntary transgression of this commandment and the dispensing of oneself from the obligation when there is no sufficient reason for so doing, will leave to the transgressor no other way open to Heaven. But it is certainly a consolation which each one of us may experience, that if we have even in some measure united our self-denial and obedience with the sufferings of Our Divine Saviour for us, we shall enjoy and share in His Resurrection. Then will be fulfilled the words: "Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is sweet and my burden is light." Wherefore I will close with the words of the great Apostle St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Now therefore, my beloved brethren, be not seduced; evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake, ye just, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God . . . therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15, 33, 34, 58). Amen.

SERMON VIII

THE DEVIL EXISTS

“Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”—MATT. 4, 1.

On the first Sunday of Lent Holy Church places before our eyes Our Divine Saviour as an example, both in His fasting and in His threefold temptation by the Devil. In His fasting Our Divine Saviour should be an example to every Catholic Christian to observe the law of fasting more conscientiously and truly, because it has been sanctified by Jesus Christ, and consecrated as the mark of Catholic life and example. In the observance of the law of fasting the Catholic Christian shows the greatness of his faith and the truth of his Christian life. Obedience is the soul of a Christian life, and the bond that unites us to the Church, and only through the Church with the Saviour, and through Him with God. Obedience is the ornament of the Christian, the most glorious virtue and the crown of eternal life. As from the obedience of Jesus Christ grace and Redemption came into the world, so also through the obedience of each Christian grace and salvation enter into his soul. Obedience to the commandments of the Church is the best atonement of the Catholic faithful for the disobedience of our first parents in the garden of Paradise. The most powerful

protest against the transgression of God's commandments, and the surest realization of the desire for redemption from Original Sin and all its consequences. For this reason the fast and abstinence commandments of the Catholic Church have a decisive signification. They indicate the greatness of disobedience, or the greatness of obedience, the nature of sin, or the nature and reason of the Redemption. They reveal man as the follower of Adam, or as the follower of Jesus Christ, as a sinner, or as one of the redeemed, according as he observes the commandments of the Church or does not observe them. In a word, it is again a decision for Christ or for Satan, as it was once the case with Adam in Paradise. His decision is loudly proclaimed before God and the world, in his obedience or disobedience to the commandments of the Church.

For this reason we read in the Gospel which presents to our consideration Our Divine Saviour fasting in the desert, also a threefold temptation by Satan. The Redeemer of the world in battle with Satan, the most bitter enemy of God and the human race — this fact must indeed have a sublime significance! What will all those now say to this singular spectacle, to this battle for the human race with the Prince of Darkness, the Father of Lies — what will all those now say to this who deny the existence of Hell and the Devil, and despise all those who, according to the words of Eternal Truth, believe in this existence?

Therefore, as I have spoken of the significance of the commandment of fasting, and of the frivolous pretexts and objections raised against it, so now I will

speak of the foolish denial of the existence of the Devil.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. How many so-called enlightened men, or it would be better to say, how many unbelievers, there are to-day, who at the mention of the Devil sneer, and look with contempt upon those who dare to pronounce this name and believe in the existence of the Devil! With the distinguished air of a highly cultured intelligence they compassionate such a Christian. What will they say to the Gospel, which speaks of the Devil, yes, which narrates that Our Divine Saviour was Himself tempted three times by the Devil? Will they likewise deny the word of God, and contemptuously set it aside as a poetic fantasy, and thereby show themselves to be real infidels and godless men, who would even subject the Revelation of Eternal Truth and Wisdom to their haughty criticism? Or will they, in order to save at least the external appearance of nominal Christianity, accept it with bad grace, and thereby betray a glaring contradiction between their real sentiments and their external expressions of faith? Poor illuminati! Who by their denial of the existence of the Devil place themselves in such contradiction to the Gospel! They must really exhibit in their own selves the whole disgrace of their unsettled Christian faith, and that they do not desire to do, in fact are ashamed to do; or they must believe in the existence of the Devil, and this belief their imaginary enlightenment tries to overcome.

Who then, my beloved, denies this existence? Is it the good Christian who believes with all his heart, who finds himself in the state of sanctifying grace, and observes the commandments of God and the Church, and who frequently fortifies and arms himself by the worthy reception of the sacraments? Oh no, the good Christian needs not to fear particularly either Hell or the Devil, for he hopes and hopes confidently for the heavenly life as a reward for his Christian life here on earth. But if he should have the misfortune to fall into grievous sin, he knows the efficacy of the sacrament of Penance, and knows how to receive it worthily. Who then deny the existence of the Devil, and with it that of Hell itself? They deny the existence of the Devil who lead a bad life, and are no longer worthy of the name of Christian; they who will not be converted, but wish to continue in their life of sin. Therefore it is that they deny the existence of the Devil and of Hell, and seek to exhibit externally a distinguished assurance, but internally their hearts are filled with anxiety. In this denial they are just as foolish as they are godless. They are godless, because they contradict the Revelation of God and the faith of the whole world, even the pagan world. They are foolish because if they had any understanding of their denial they would necessarily understand that they are compelled to deny more articles of faith.

2. In fact these illuminati must deny that the disobedient angels were cast out of Heaven. Why did Lucifer rise in rebellion against God in Heaven, why did this great angel, clothed with power and glory, to-

gether with innumerable others, rise in rebellion against Almighty God? It was because he did not wish to obey the commandment of God. Only through this obedience would he, together with the other angels, have been permitted to enter into the vision of the eternal majesty of God, into His heavenly bliss, for the angels also had to merit their bliss through obedience, just as later on Adam had to merit the constant possession of Paradise by obedience, and as we Christians must by obedience to Holy Church merit salvation and grace. But what was the commandment of God to the angels? It was, according to the opinion of the Fathers of the Church, the due adoration and acknowledgment of Our Divine Saviour as their heavenly Lord and King, to Whom the angels as well as mankind owe their grace and glory. It is true that the Saviour was not yet born, but God permitted them to behold in spirit the future Saviour, to Whom they were to offer their homage and subjection,—to Him, the King of Glory, in Whose Name, according to the words of the Apostle, every knee must bow in Heaven, on earth and under the earth. This it was that induced Lucifer in his pride to rebel against God. He refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ not only as the only begotten Son of God, but also His right as man to be placed above him. “I will be like the Most High,” this was, according to the words of Holy Scripture, his proud proclamation. For this reason he fell away from God, and in consequence of his pride, plunged himself with all his followers into Hell, and is now called the Devil. This warfare against the Saviour which began in

Heaven is still prosecuted on earth. From it came the threefold temptation in the desert, and the constant persecution of the Church, which through the power of God, the gates of Hell will never overcome. This warfare and hatred against the Redeemer and His Church is constantly going on before our own eyes, and will last until the day of judgment, when Jesus Christ will come again, and will judge all creatures, the angels of Heaven, the whole human race and all the devils of Hell. On that terrible day all knees will bow before Him, and adore Him as King of Heaven and earth. All these truths which give to us a better understanding of the expulsion of the angels, of the true reason of the persecution of the Church, of the past, of the present and of the future, all these are they compelled to deny who scoff at the existence of the Devil and his hosts of followers, if they do not wish to be considered fools, or if they still wish to preserve some semblance of intelligence in their denial.

3. But, my beloved, these so-called learned men must deny still more if they do not wish to be considered as stupid in their denial as they are godless. They must deny the Fall of our first parents in Paradise, for why did our first parents sin and lose Paradise, and why did sin, and with it death, enter into the world? Because in their pride they were seduced by the lying promise: "You will become as gods," and were thus led astray by Satan, who now continues his hatred against God here on earth by his evil machinations which he began in Heaven. They must deny the Fall of our first parents, a fact which even the pagan world believes,

and hence if they wish to be reasonable in their denial they must deny Original Sin with all its temporal and eternal consequences. But the whole world, and all nature, and all creatures as well as mankind are living witnesses of the fact of the Fall. But according to the unbelief of these self-styled learned men, Baptism would not be necessary. And would even that be all? No! That is only the beginning of the enumeration of the articles of faith which these people are obliged to deny and scoff at under pain of being considered inconsistent in their denial. They would be obliged to deny the words which God spoke in Paradise: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. 3, 15).

Is this enmity not evident still between Satan with his angels and the Church with those who are her true children? Is this enmity not evident between the bad and the good, between sinners and the just, between unbelievers and believers? How wonderfully are the words of God fulfilled: "Upon thy breast shalt thou go on earth, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3, 14). The serpent is not meant, but the Devil; he was cursed, he will eat earth, not that indeed on which plants live and thrive, but he will eat of the earth. The excretions and the filth of the earth are his food. And what is this filth of the earth? It is the sins, the vileness, the excesses and all the hideous vices of men. These are the food of Satan; they are his food, his joy, his delight even down to the present time. For this reason he tempts men and es-

pecially Christians to sin, as he once tempted Adam in Paradise. But the Christian whom Jesus Christ has redeemed should seek and find his food here on earth in the grace of God, in the sacraments, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and finally in the Beatific Vision of God. The Devil as the Father of Lies creeps on his belly; he flees the light, he seeks darkness and the works of darkness, just as do the murderer and the thief, for the execution of their deeds of evil, avoid the light of day and await the darkness of night.

4. Whosoever, therefore, denies the existence of the Devil must also deny these facts; first of all he must deny the Word of God which is fulfilled even to the present day; he must deny everything unless he wishes to be considered as foolish as he is godless in his denial. He must deny even more than this, for he must deny the works of Jesus Christ and His miracles; he must deny His words about Satan, and the truth of His miracles worked upon those possessed, of which the Holy Scriptures are full, and which moved even the Jewish people to admiration of the Saviour and to the praise of God. Yes, he must even deny Jesus Christ the Saviour. Why did Jesus Christ die on the Cross? Every child knows the answer: in order to redeem us from the slavery of the Devil, and to establish the kingdom of grace and truth. But if this Redemption is not true, as Our Divine Saviour has sufficiently taught and confirmed with His Blood, as the whole world has believed and confessed for its consolation and joy, then is Jesus Christ not the Eternal Truth, He is not Our Saviour, nor the Eternal Son of God. His promises

and His words are false, and He is what human lips refuse to utter, a liar and a deceiver. The Catholic Church which teaches us the truths of Our Divine Saviour as well as the existence of the Redeemer, would not be the Holy Church, the kingdom of God on earth. The Apostles and martyrs, the saints and confessors, the Christians throughout the ages would have been deceivers or among the deceived. The whole of Christianity, all the teachings of faith, the sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all would have no meaning, and would effect no grace, no forgiveness of sin, no reconciliation with God and no joy of soul.

He who denies the existence of the Devil asserts all these terrible consequences. He is just as godless as he is foolish, since Christianity, its teachings, its sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, all exist to-day in all their truth and blessing and redeeming power. Yes, such a foolish and godless man must deny also Heaven and eternal bliss. If God is just He must punish the wicked as well as reward the good. If the wicked are not punished He cannot reward the good. If there is no Hell, then there is no punishment, and consequently there is also no reward and no Heaven. Yes, there is not even a just God reigning in Heaven. How then can God be the Eternal Truth and Wisdom, and how can He be Eternal Justice if that which He has revealed about the existence of the Devil and about eternal reward and punishment be not true? Thus such men are as ignorant as they are godless.

One does not know, my beloved, at which he should feel more astonishment, at their absolute stupidity or

at their godlessness. But it must come to this, if one has begun to deny this truth of Christianity on account of his unchristian and evil life, he becomes filled with anxiety and strives to quiet his conscience by the denial of the existence of Satan. For this one sin begets other and terrible sins, and leads to absolute infidelity. It must come to this if man in his presumption begins to lose his faith and to substitute himself as a judge of God and of Eternal Truth. In truth, the greatness of his fall will be proportionate to the arrogance of his pride. There is in fact nothing more terrible than to wish to rob poor oppressed humanity of its faith and hope in redemption, and consequently in the mercy of God and the existence of a better life beyond the grave. There is nothing more terrible than to rob man of his faith in a just reward, consequently in a Just Judge, and to open the way to all evils, thereby changing this world of ours into a veritable hell. All this is done through the ignorant denial of the existence of the Devil.

5. This sad denial takes away at the same time the possibility of a true appreciation of the temptation of Jesus by the Devil, and of the temptation of Christians throughout the span of their mortal lives. For why was it that Our Divine Saviour permitted Himself to be tempted by Satan? It terrifies indeed the Christian soul that Our Divine Saviour, the Joy of the Angels and the Consolation of men, permitted Satan to tempt Him to fall away from God and give up the work of Redemption. But herein are concealed the glorious mysteries of humility, of obedience and compassion,

so that they fill the soul with new love and gratitude towards Jesus, and with abhorrence of the arrogant ignorance of unbelief.

Our Divine Saviour came into the world in order to redeem man and destroy the works of Satan. Adam wished to be like unto God, and for this reason Our Divine Saviour at the beginning of His public ministry, placed Himself among sinners on the banks of the Jordan, and submitted to the Baptism of Penance which St. John the Baptist administered. This was His deepest humiliation of Self, the first satisfaction for the pride of Adam and of all men. But Adam sinned still more by his enjoyment of the forbidden food, and for this reason Our Divine Saviour offered the second sacrifice of atonement by His forty days fasting in the desert. Adam, moreover, permitted himself to be tempted and led astray by Satan, and that was the reason why Our Divine Saviour permitted Himself to be tempted three times in the desert in order to make atonement for Adam's Fall. As Father of Lies Satan offered to the Redeemer all the kingdoms of the world if He would, falling down, adore him. But as Satan was cast out of Heaven because he wished to be like unto God, so too Our Divine Saviour bade him to leave His presence.

As Our Divine Saviour permitted Himself to be tempted at the beginning of His public life, so also did temptation come to Him at the beginning of His Priestly Office. Adam sinned in a garden and brought death into the world, and for this reason Our Divine Saviour entered the Garden of Gethsemane to begin

the work of Redemption, in order that in the same manner the life of grace should come forth from a garden to mankind. Our Divine Saviour was tempted three times at the beginning of His Priestly Office, as He was at the beginning of His Prophetic or Teaching Office. He was now tempted to avoid the chalice of suffering, as He was tempted in the desert to accept the chalice of joy which Satan held out to Him. For this reason Our Divine Saviour prayed on Mt. Olivet, and offered to God, His heavenly Father, in the most wonderful act of obedience, His Will as a sacrifice. "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26, 39). Our Divine Saviour conquered through His obedience, and by His Death on the Cross redeemed the world from the slavery of death and the Devil.

6. We too, my beloved, are tempted by the Devil as were Adam and Jesus Christ tempted by him. Innumerable passages of Holy Scripture bear witness to this truth, which is as old as the world itself, and is borne out in Judas, Ananias, and thousands of others to-day. Our Divine Saviour warns us; He speaks of the wicked enemy who seeks to stifle the seed of the Divine Word and of grace in the heart of man. God permits these temptations in order that we may not allow ourselves to be overcome as Adam was, but that like Jesus we may overcome the Devil and thereby win our salvation, declaring ourselves for God, for His commandments, and consequently obtain grace and

eternal life. These temptations should serve for our greater glory and bliss; in this warfare the Christian may exhibit the greatness of his faith, love and obedience. In fighting against temptations he battles for God's honor and for his soul's salvation. In struggles and sufferings the Christian is a disciple of Jesus Christ, and like Him he crushes Satan's head, and as once Heaven was the place where the good angels fought for God against Satan and his followers, and as later Paradise was the scene of battle against Satan, so from now on is the Catholic Church the battleground. Here every Catholic Christian must decide whether he will imitate Adam or Jesus Christ, whether he will be obedient to God or disobedient, faithful or unfaithful, and for this reason strive to merit for himself sin and death or grace and redemption for all eternity.

For this reason the ignorant denial of the existence of the Devil is the giving up, on the part of the Christian, of his Christian vocation, a giving up of grace and salvation, and a certain proof of the shameful defeat of his life's purpose. God has given to us all the weapons which we need to conquer, prayer, the sacraments, faith and penitence. Whosoever makes use of these weapons has nothing to fear, yes, precisely for the good Christian the existence of the Devil and his temptations are means to acquire greater merits, incentives to a more zealous imitation of Christ, to greater virtues, and to the attainment of greater happiness to which he will be called after his loyal serv-

ice in battle, that he may take the place of the fallen angels, and in the vision of God, with Jesus Christ and the faithful angels, celebrate the victory eternally that has been won over Satan, death and Hell. Amen.

SERMON IX

THE DEVIL IS THE UNWILLING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

"In my name they shall cast out devils."—MARK 16, 17.

When Our Divine Saviour, forty days after His glorious Resurrection, had gathered His disciples around Him for the last time, in order in their presence to ascend into Heaven from Mount Olivet, He gave to them the power to lay their hands upon the sick, to heal them and to cast out devils in His name. This twofold power should bear witness to the world of the Divinity of His Mission, and of the truth of His teaching. Truly wonderful! Not His bitter Passion and Death, not the other miracles of His mercy, no, this twofold power, to heal the sick and to cast out the Devil from those possessed, should be the eloquent witness of His Divinity and of the truth of His teaching. And, in fact, the Apostles made good use of this power, and through it led the Jews and pagans to belief in the Divine Saviour.

As the heir of the Apostolic power the Catholic Church has, throughout the succeeding ages, made use of this testimony in order to spread the Christian faith throughout the world. If she has not healed all the sick in a miraculous manner, she has nevertheless received them in such a glorious way, unknown to the

pagans, that she has touched their hearts and won them over to the Christian faith. For whence originate all the magnificent hospitals for the sick, if not from the Catholic Church? She it was that founded and built them; and she founded the numerous religious orders which devote themselves entirely to the alleviation of human suffering, the religious orders of Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, and so on. These have, through their self-sacrificing care of the sick, converted thousands of heathens and thousands of unbelievers to Christ.

In like manner has the Catholic Church, my beloved, by means of her power of driving out devils, converted millions of pagans and saved millions of sinners. Every age attests with loud voice this truth. Every age attests the Divinity of the Saviour and the truth of the Catholic Church. And what will the free-thinking unbelievers who scorn and deny the existence of the Devil answer to these facts? What will be their answer if I prove conclusively to-day from the power which Christ committed to His Apostles at His Ascension that even the Devil is himself an unwilling witness to the truth of the Christian faith?

As I spoke last time about the existence of the Devil, I shall also do so to-day. And may the free-thinking scoffers and unbelievers feel shame at the fact that even the Devil himself gives testimony of the truth of the Catholic faith. This instructive topic shall occupy us to-day.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. The power to cast out devils in His Name, which Our Divine Saviour gave to His Apostles, and consequently to the Church, is twofold. The first refers to the soul, the second to the body. The soul is, in the state of grievous sin, in the power and slavery of the Devil. If the Devil is not personally in such a soul his spirit abides in it, the spirit of sin and of disobedience to God. But the Church has the power to forgive sins in the Name of Jesus. Consequently she has the power to free the soul from sin and to constitute it in the grace of God.

This power of the Church, upon which rests in a most particular manner the salvation of the world, even the freethinker does not easily deny without sinking entirely into the abyss of unbelief. The mercy of God, the blessing of the Redemption, the hope and the conviction of Christianity exhibit themselves here so signally that even the unbeliever hesitates to deny this power of the Church. For this reason I shall not speak to-day of this power of the Church, but of that other power, to expel the Devil from these possessed, and here I shall offer the proof that the Devil is the unwilling witness of the truth of the Catholic faith.

2. No Christian who believes the Gospel can or may deny that there were, especially at the time of Our Divine Saviour, many possessed by the Devil, that is, men upon whom the Spirit of Evil exercised an evil and harmful influence, on the powers of their body as well as of their soul, in that he was in them. The Evangelists repeatedly testify that Our Divine Saviour cast out the evil spirits from the possessed. They re-

late how the Jews and even the pagans brought such unfortunate creatures to Him. They narrate the astonishment and joy of the people when one who had been possessed was healed. The words of the Saviour whereby He healed them and the answers which the evil spirits gave, or the cry of distress which they raised, they likewise narrate (Mark 5; Matt. 4, 12).

The belief in possession by the Devil was general both among the Jews and the pagans. Yes, Our Divine Saviour proved to the Pharisees precisely from the power which He exercised of casting out devils, a power which they could not deny, the Divinity of His Mission (Matt. 12, 28). Only a bad or an unbelieving man can assert that Jesus espoused superstition and error by His words and deeds. Yet the Apostles themselves taught this belief later on among the pagans, and cast out evil spirits (Acts 16, 19). And what the Apostles did took place in subsequent centuries in the Church, and especially among the heathens. Wherefore the Catholic Church has special prayers which are termed Exorcisms, that is, exorcisms of the Evil Spirit, and these contain a special adjuration to be employed by the exorcist. If there are among the Christians, in consequence of Baptism, no possessed, or if it be true that the fact of possession is rarely met with, there are nevertheless many instances of diabolical possession among heathens. This is a consequence of original sin whereby man is delivered over to the slavery of the Devil from which only Baptism can free him. For Catholic Christians who fall into sin after Baptism the sacrament of Penance has been instituted, and by it

the works of Satan in the soul are destroyed, the soul is freed from the bondage of Satan, and attains, in place of the evil spirit of sin, the spirit and grace of God. And yet there are Christians whose godlessness and hatred of the Catholic Church is a far greater evil than the possession of the body by the Devil. That restless spark of hatred that is seen in the eyes of so many godless men proves still more what hellish hatred fills their souls. May God preserve each one of us from this terrible, almost hopeless condition, which is the usual consequence of irreligion and vice.

3. But how, my beloved, is the Devil, if even against his will, the best witness of the truth of the Catholic faith? As an answer to this question I will cite the testimony of the Fathers of the Church. Just as Our Divine Saviour Himself and His Apostles referred the Jews and the pagans to the fact that the evil spirits must leave the possessed at their command, so too the Fathers of the Church have done throughout the early centuries of Christianity. As the principal proof for the truth of the Christian religion they referred the pagans and even the teachers of error, to the casting out of the Devil from those possessed, by the invocation of the Name of Jesus. This casting out of the Devil in the presence of numerous witnesses is a miracle, but the miracles were always a proof which God Himself gave to the truth of their teaching. Faith is increased by these miracles in the fact that the Name of Jesus is above every name, and that in His Name every knee must bow of those that are in Heaven and on earth, consequently that Jesus is the Saviour of the

world, and the Catholic Church is His true Church. Hope is strengthened, for only in the Name of Jesus and in His Church is salvation to be hoped for. The love for Jesus is enkindled which makes for the terror of Hell and for the salvation and bliss of the world.

Should I now enumerate the martyrs and the Fathers who from the earliest times have employed this proof? Very well! They are: the holy Bishop Justin, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus, Lactantius, Origen, Cyprian, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Pope Gregory the Great, and many others. They relate not only how Our Divine Saviour and His Apostles cured the possessed, but also what took place before their own eyes, how they themselves or others in presence of witnesses cast out devils. They confirm universally acknowledged facts, which the pagans and Jews could not deny, and which did not take place only once or twice but most frequently. Yes, these miracles which the saints or martyrs performed in the name of Jesus, and which were mostly the cause of the conversion of multitudes of pagans, urged on the persecutors to hate and persecute the Christians more relentlessly, just as the Pharisees hated Our Divine Saviour more according to the greatness of His miracles and the thankfulness and praise of the people that were accorded to Him on that account.

The defenders of Christian truth appeal with the greatest confidence to these miracles, in order to hold before the eyes of the pagans the stupidity of their

idolatry, and the glory of the Redemption. Thus did the holy Bishop and martyr Cyprian of Carthage (Demet. N. 15), St. Athanasius of Alexandria (De Incar. No. 48), St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Cat. 4, 13), St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome and other Fathers and saints of the Church. If they had not spoken the truth, or if the miracles had not been a thousand times confirmed, the pagans, the Jews, the unbelievers, would have accused them of lying, and condemned them as deceivers and false teachers. But what was the consequence of their fundamental proof and of the facts so evident? There could be no other consequence than that a multitude of the better disposed among the pagans were converted, permitted themselves to be baptized, and praised Jesus as the Redeemer Who had come into the world to redeem man from the slavery of sin, of Satan and of death.

In Asia, Africa, France and Italy and other countries, witnesses rose up for such deeds and miracles. The witnesses are the saints, the martyrs, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, whom all the world holds in high esteem and honor. The deeds were public, universally known, frequent and acknowledged by both the Jews and the pagans. What follows, therefore, from this? It necessarily follows from this that which our faith teaches, that there are evil spirits which are hostile to God and to man, and seek to destroy the salvation of souls. Holy Scripture is fully confirmed and the miracles which Our Divine Saviour Himself performed on the possessed have also in later centuries been repeated by His holy servants, just as all the other

miracles of Our Divine Lord have been renewed : thus, for example, the resurrection from the dead, the healing of the sick, the blind and the lame, the multiplication of bread and many others. Thus the promise which He gave to His Apostles and disciples at His Ascension into Heaven : “ In my name you shall cast out devils,” has been literally kept. In all ages have the words of the Apostle been signally fulfilled : “ In the name of Jesus every knee shall bend, in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth.” The power of Jesus lives on in the Catholic Church ; she is His true Church, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the Kingdom of Redemption, in which to the present day men are redeemed from the slavery of sin and of Satan, and guided into eternal bliss.

4. Satan with his followers is, therefore, against his will the witness of the truth of the Christian faith. He must glorify Jesus Christ, even against his will, as the Divine Redeemer of the world ; he must against his will give to Him honor, increase faith in Jesus, strengthen hope in Him, and enkindle love for Him, a love all the greater in proportion to the love exhibited by Jesus Christ in redeeming us and the world. And if there are to-day among Christians very few who are possessed, there are many among the heathen people, as our missionaries relate. But there are numberless diabolical agencies nowadays, for instance, moving tables, spiritistic *séances*, and other superstitious practises. Yes, how many men go so far in their godlessness that they call upon the Devil, and promise the Devil their service if he will permit them to live in

luxury, who promise to serve him out of their hatred for the Saviour. These graceless men will one day be frightfully undeceived, and suffer for all eternity on account of their godless practises.

In truth if there is a Redeemer there must also be a Devil from whose slavery the Redeemer has freed us. If there is a Heaven there must also be its opposite, a Hell. If there is grace there must necessarily also be a lack of grace; if there is virtue there must also be its opposite, vice. No one can deny this fact of contradictories, any more than he can deny that lying is contrary to truth, or death to life. The whole world is filled with faith in Our Divine Saviour, and therefore the whole world is filled with the certainty that there is a Devil, the Prince of Darkness and of Hell. The whole world is convinced of the truth that we have guardian angels, and therefore is the whole world convinced too of the existence of evil spirits, because why should we have guardian angels if not to protect us against the attacks of the Devil? Destroy belief in Satan and you destroy at the same time faith in Our Divine Saviour. Whosoever does not believe in Hell cannot believe in Heaven. Whosoever denies the justice of God must also doubt His mercy, and if there is no bliss or happiness for the living of a good life there can be no condemnation for a life of sin.

5. For this reason, my beloved, the Devil is, with his fallen angels, the best witness for Christian truth, for the Divinity of Christ, and for the good fortune of redemption and bliss through Christ. Take away this faith and contest the existence of the Devil and of

Hell, and men will become devils and the earth a hell. For what is it that restrains most men from vice and injustice, from murder and rapine, or what is it that moves them to contrition and amendment, if it is not the fear of Hell and of companionship with the Devil? What induced millions to live a Christian life, what made the saints, yes, what made the Christians even martyrs, if it was not the love of God and the fear of Hell?

What makes men sinners and evil doers if not their lack of belief in the existence of Hell? Yes, if they would believe, earnestly believe, there would be no sin, no misdeeds on earth, for all would then fear to experience in Hell as a just recompense for their misdeeds the punishment meted out to the fallen angels. Thus Our Divine Saviour, the Apostles, the saints, good Christians, yes, even sinners, announce to us that there is a Devil. But he himself is against his own will the best witness of the Divinity of the Redeemer, of the truth of the Church, of the beauty of Christian life, and the necessity of grace and the sacraments. In fact, my beloved, the world is filled with faith in the Divine Redeemer, the whole world is full of hope in a future happy life, and for this reason is the whole world, even the Jews and pagans, full of faith in the existence of the Devil and full of fear of Hell. But take away this faith and this fear of Hell and you rob yourself and others of the truth of faith, the consolation of Christian hope, the joy of Christian charity, the necessity of redemption, the Divine foundation of the Catholic Church, the institution of the sacraments,—

in a word everything that elevates man, sanctifies and encourages him, and consoles and strengthens him in life and in death. Yes truly, Heaven proves the existence of Hell; the Redeemer the existence of Satan; the Kingdom of God on earth, the Church, proves the Kingdom of Satan; grace proves the necessity of grace; virtue proves the existence of vice; the guardian angels attest the existence of evil spirits. And Satan and his kingdom is for this very reason the best witness for the truth of the Christian faith.

For this reason we scarcely know at what to be more astonished, the godlessness of blinded men who deny the truth of the Christian religion and the necessity of the Redemption, and are therefore put to shame by the Devil himself, for "even the devils believe and tremble," as Holy Scripture says; or the stupidity of those who wish to deny the existence of Satan, since the whole world is full of the belief in his existence and is full of the works of Satan. Thus spoke one of these ignorant and arrogant men at one time to a good and God-fearing Christian: "My poor man, how badly you will find yourself to have been deceived if there is no Heaven!" But the Christian gave him this apt retort: "My poor man, how badly you will be deceived if there is a Hell!"

Yes, this is the best consolation, a Christian life which fears nothing but hopes for everything. But the most terrible misfortune is unbelief and an un-Christian life, which hopes for nothing, for absolutely nothing, but which has everything to fear. May this consolation of a Christian life animate and rejoice you

all, in order that we with the Apostle St. John in life and in death may ever exclaim: "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (1 John 5, 4). Our faith overcomes sin and Satan; our faith imparts to us grace, obtains for us a merciful judgment, leads us to resurrection and eternal life, where we with Jesus and His saints in the Church Triumphant of God in Heaven will celebrate the eternal victory over Satan and over death. I invite you all in the name and in the authority of Jesus Christ to prepare yourselves well for this wonderful festival, through faith and a Christian life. Amen.

SERMON X

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."—HEB. 9, 27.

We are taught by daily experience as well as by Holy Scripture, that man's life upon earth is a warfare. The life of every one of us, from the cradle to the grave, is but the record of a conflict, severe and unceasing, of our virtuous with our sinful inclinations; of the struggle of the flesh on the one hand, alluring us to sin, and the law of the mind on the other, forbidding it. The world is but a great battlefield, where all men are enrolled under either of two banners; that of Jesus Christ or that of the Prince of Darkness. And it must be owned that the greater part of men, avowedly or not, are fighting under the standard of the Evil One. But fortunately for the good and virtuous, this battle ends not here below, else vice would be triumphant and Satan proclaimed the victor. This life is but the scene of the conflict, the bloody arena where the heat and burden of the fight are to be sustained, but it is in the great hereafter that we are to seek the laurel wreaths of victory.

Human life begins here, but ends not here. Have you ever thought what a great thing human life is?

How infinite in its nature! How immortal in its duration! It seems a little thing for a child to be born into the world, and yet every soul born into the world adds to God's creation something that shall never die. It begins in time, but shall pass through time into eternity, and partake of the immortality of God Himself. The human soul once created is deathless forevermore; it shall inherit undying torture or unending bliss. Its history is divided into two great periods — one ending with death and the other beginning with death. It is placed here in this life to prove its worthiness for an eternal one hereafter. "It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death to be judged." If found worthy, we shall receive the reward due to the brave; if we shall have proved ourselves traitors to God's cause we cannot but expect the punishment of the traitor.

It is, therefore, my purpose this evening to speak to you of that most important event in the history of each one of us, I mean the dread hour when each one of us must appear before the tribunal of God to render an account of our life on earth. According to Catholic theology, immediately after death the soul appears in the presence of Jesus Christ to be judged, and Catholic theologians teach that this judgment takes place in the very chamber of death itself. There in that room while they are preparing the body for the grave, the soul has already learned the secrets of the eternal world.

As there is no apprehension concerning the death of the just, as the judgment of the just will be but his en-

trance into the kingdom of God, I shall confine my remarks to the consideration of the sinner brought before the tribunal of God the moment after death. Nor shall we take our sinner from those outside the Church, who, perhaps more from misfortune than fault, have not known the whole truth; but we shall take him from our everyday Catholics, born and reared in the faith, who have sometimes even received the sacraments and attended Mass more or less regularly.

1. But first let us say a word about the life of this man. He is a man who, although born in the true faith, lives not according to its teachings. He is content with a dead faith, and lives for the world and not for the end for which he was made. His life is one of pleasure and gratification, not of penance and self-denial. He is solicitous for the praise of men, not for the approval of his conscience. He makes little or no scruple of violating God's law, if it will serve his purpose. He seldom thinks of God, and from his mode of life you would think that he was to stay on earth forever. He has already virtually abandoned the Cross and made himself over to the enemy. He lives on in mortal sin, without purpose of change; he seldom approaches the sacraments, and if so not from motives of piety, but to keep up his membership in a fraternal society. Perhaps he goes to Mass occasionally; if so it is the sum of his piety, and he does it, because even the world regards a little religion as respectable. He hears the priest utter the great truths of religion, but they affect him not. He stifles the voice of conscience and chokes the inspiration of God; or most fatal of all

delusions, he promises himself that he will repent before he dies; but, alas, that time does not come to him.

There are many such men to-day, who live and die nominal Catholics. It is almost the same to them as if there were no God, no eternity, no Heaven, or no Hell. They never reflect; they have no correct idea of their personal responsibility to God. They break the commandments on the slightest temptation; in a word, they are immersed in this world, and its pleasures. Now such a man meets with a sudden death. He goes forth in the morning in health and strength, but before the day is far spent, he meets with an accident, is carried home on a litter, and soon passes away. This man lived for the world alone, heedless of the warning of our Lord, "Thou shalt not know the day nor the hour when I will come."

2. Now let us follow the soul of that man into eternity. As he ceases to see his weeping relatives in his room, he begins to discern other objects. Who is that standing there? The face seems familiar — ah yes, he saw that face often in pictures, in school and Church. It is Jesus Christ! He knows that face now; it is the same, and yet how changed! When he saw that face in the pictures it was crowned with thorns; now it is crowned with a diadem of matchless glory. When he saw that form in the Church it was naked and hanging on the Cross. Now it is clothed in regal splendor. Yes, Jesus Christ is there; and He is looking on him with eyes of fire. But there are two more present, and who are they? He ought to know them for they have been his lifelong companions. One is very beautiful

—his guardian angel, but he looks sad now. And the other is the black and hideous Demon of Hell, that crouches at his side, full of hate and malice, and triumph, too, for he has dogged the steps of that poor man from youth to age, and now the time has come for him to seize his prey. And now as the sinner looks from one to another the meaning of it all breaks upon his mind. He had lived all his life in a dream, but now the conviction of the reality of the great truth of religion flashes upon his mind, and this conviction is accompanied by mortal terror. Why is Jesus Christ there? Why are the angel and the demon there? It is to try him. Yes, he is to be tried by an unerring Judge — Jesus Christ.

3. The sinner never tried himself, never examined his conscience, but now he is to be tried. And by what law is he to be judged? By the Ten Commandments, of which he has heard so often and neglected so completely. God had said: "I am the Lord thy God." He made the world and its pleasures his God. The Lord has said: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." He had committed it. God had said: "Thou shalt not steal," and he had stolen. God had said: "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day." He had desecrated the Sunday and neglected the Sunday's Mass. God had said: "Thou shalt do no murder:" and he had murdered his own soul by drunkenness. He had grown bold in sin, and thought God had hidden away His face and would never see it. And now he is brought to trial; and Satan is there as his accuser.

"I claim this soul as mine. Look at it," he says;

“see if it does not belong to me? Does it not look like me? Wilt thou take a soul like that and place it in Paradise?” Look at that sin-scarred soul! Each sin has left its foul stain upon it. And to look upon that soul you might read its history. There is the gangrene of impurity, and the spot of anger, and the tumor of pride, and the scale of avarice. Oh! how hideous it is, and how horribly changed, for it was once radiant with baptismal innocence. The words of the demon are too true; it resembles him. But the accuser goes on: “I claim this body as mine. I claim those eyes as mine, by the title of all the lascivious looks which they have given. I claim those hands as mine — by the title of all the acts of violence they have committed. I claim those feet as mine — because they were swift to carry him to the places of disrepute, and slow to go to the church of God. I claim those ears as mine — by the title of all the smutty talk and calumnies which they have so greedily drunk in. I claim this mouth as mine — by the title of all the blasphemies and impurities it has uttered.”

4. But Satan knows that he is a liar, and therefore needs witnesses to confirm his words. And now there appears on the scene a band of lost souls. Who is that who speaks to him first, and holds out her long withered fingers to him, and says with a horrid laugh, “I think you know me, I followed thee to ruin; it is fitting thou shouldst follow me to hell.” But there is another woman; it is his wife, the woman whom he had sworn to protect and honor, but whom he had defiled, dishonored and ruined. She looks upon him with a blood-

shot eye, and says, "My husband, thou wert my tormentor in time; I will be thy tormentor in eternity." But who are those young people, that young man, and young woman? Ah! they are his son and daughter, of whom he took no care; who, finding nothing but hell at home, went out, the one to the tavern and the gambling room, the other to the ball and the lonely place of assignation, and, after a short career of dissipation, were both cut off in sin. They meet him now and say to him: "Father thou didst pave the way of perdition for us, and now we will cling to thee, and drag thee deeper, who art at once the author of our life and of our destruction."

5. Has not the spirit of wickedness made out his case? Would you not condemn that man yourselves? But, wait! Perhaps he did good penance. His guardian angel stands there, but alas, with downcast look, betokening his despair. The Judge says to the angel: "What hast thou to say in behalf of the soul committed to thy care?" The angel answers with a sigh: "Most just and holy Sovereign, I have naught to say, that can set aside the accusations made. All I can do is to vindicate Thy justice, and my fidelity. He was a Catholic, but in name only; his life was a living scandal to the Church; he seldom went to the sacraments, and then out of human respect, and always despised Thy inspirations. He has done nothing his whole life, but gratify himself, in seeking riches, pleasures, honors, and whatever else might minister to self-love. He made himself the center of all his thoughts, the object of all his solicitude, the final end of all his labors.

And more, he murdered souls by his scandalous conduct. He rent asunder the bonds of the holiest of unions—the union of two hearts cemented by the blessing of Christ's sacrament. He ruined the good name, and blasted the hopes of the young and virtuous. What else can I do but return to Thee, my Master, the crown prepared for him that Thou mayest place it on another brow."

6. Found guilty on so many counts, on what will the sinner rely? Has he nothing to offer in extenuation, nothing with which to appease the anger of God? May he not say that he had the faith, that he was born a Catholic! But this, far from improving his case, will only serve to make his sentence the surer—his damnation the deeper; for, having known better, he has not acted according to his knowledge. He has sinned against the light. Less culpable is he who sins through ignorance than he who sins through malice. No! the fact of his having been born in the faith will not avail him. Little thanks to him that he had the faith; he received it as a family inheritance; he was baptized, we may say, in spite of himself; for, as soon as he could, he tried to render nugatory the promises made for him at the holy font. All precious as faith is, we must remember that by it alone it is impossible to please God. Faith is only the beginning, the source of justification; but the faith that God requires is faith animated by charity; a living faith that shows itself in the observance of God's laws.

But may he not rely upon the mercy of God? Can Jesus Christ resist his appeal for mercy? No, not if

there were a real disposition to do penance in the heart. But there is no penance in the other world. There is only the desire to escape punishment, not to escape sin; and being out of the present order of God's providence which leaves the will free, there is no real conversion there. Nothing remains, therefore, but to pronounce sentence. He has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. "Depart from Me, your Creator and Redeemer, your First Beginning and Last End, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!" What can the sinner do but curse himself; curse the day when he was born; curse the folly and blindness which has brought upon him such misery and woe. The Devil mocking him takes charge of him, glad that he has defrauded Christ of another soul bought with the shedding of His Blood. He is received in Hell with the shouts of derision of the damned, for if they must suffer, there is still another to suffer with them.

7. You may think this picture over-drawn, but it is only the feeblest effort to depict that awful trial which all of us must sooner or later undergo. This trial is continually going on — it follows each death.

And now let us return to that room where the corpse is laid out. They have just finished preparing it for the grave. They have smoothed the body and laid a white cloth over it; and they say how natural it looks. It wears the smile they remember it used to wear in youth, and that poor soul of which they are talking is lost. The Judge of the living and the dead has been there, and has consigned the miserable man's soul to Hell, and his body to the resurrection of damnation.

And this is going on every day, and every hour of the day. Wherever death overtakes a man, there judgment meets him. You know how death met Baltasar, the Chaldean king. He was a drunkard, an adulterer, a sacrilegious robber; and one night, when he was drunk and held an impious feast, surrounded by his concubines, and with the vessels of God's house on the table, a hand appeared on the wall and wrote this sentence: "Mane, Thecel, Phares; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it; thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting"; and that night he died. Yes, in the midst of their sin, in the place where they go, Jesus Christ meets the soul and judges it. Yes, wherever death meets you, there Jesus Christ will meet you and condemn you. "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." It may be to-morrow. It may be in the very act of commission of sin. It may be without any opportunity of preparation. You will stand before an inflexible and unerring Judge. Let us not delay then to propitiate Him while we can. In that tribunal after death, there is no mercy for the sinner; but there is another tribunal which He has established, where there is mercy — the tribunal of Penance. There the accuser is not the Devil, but the sinner himself; he is not only the accuser but his own witness against himself. There the angel waits with joy, not with sorrow. There Jesus Christ is present, but not in wrath. And there the sentence is: "I absolve thee," not "I condemn thee." Let us then appeal from the judgment after death to penance now, and we may rest assured that the sentence of Our

Saviour will be a favorable one. And then, when summoned before the dread tribunal, we shall hear the sweet angelic voice, in the words of Cardinal Newman:

“Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And, o’er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.
And thou without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.
Angels, to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest;
And Masses on earth, and prayers in heaven
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.
Farewell, but not forever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.”

Amen.

SERMON XI

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

“It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment.”—HEB. 9, 27.

The human soul is judged at the very instant of its separation from the body. When the soul quits its companion, the body, it finds itself on the instant face to face with God. By the side of the dead body the tribunal of Jesus Christ is set up, and, before the sorrowing friends round the couch of death are aware of the death of their dear departed, a thrilling scene has been enacted. The disembodied soul has stood before its Maker; its life has been examined — its virtues recounted, its vices recorded. A memorable sentence has been pronounced, a destiny has been decided of eternal evil or eternal joy. “It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment.” An appalling thought is the thought of the great judgment day of the human soul.

We saw last Sunday evening what a terrible thing it is to die. Yes, but to be judged, that is far more terrible. Shocking as death is, human nature can nevertheless conquer the dread of death, but no nature can overcome the fear of judgment. Appalling as death is, there is hardly a person in human nature that

has not been strong enough to overcome and conquer the fear of death. Courage has mocked at death, love has smiled at death, revenge has rushed on death, and grief sometimes with upturned hands has prayed for death. But no person however strong, no nature whether human or angelic, can contemplate unmoved the interview of the creature with the Creator, when the Creator sits as Judge to decide in all justice an eternal lot of misery or of happiness.

Now, let us picture to-night as well as we can to the mind's eye, this scene of the great judgment day of the human soul.

The best we can do is to paint but a faint likeness of it. Any picture that the tongue of man can draw falls far short of the reality; for how can we express in human language the experiences of that disembodied soul, that intangible, insensible, invisible spirit, the disembodied soul of man? Still let us do our best.

1. *And now* let me ask each of you, thinking it out for himself or herself, to imagine that you are lying on the bed of death, as before long each one of us shall be lying on our bed of death. Your last hour has come; your weeping friends are standing around your bed bidding you a last farewell in this world. A priest is reading over you the prayers for a departing soul. The end for you has come; the sands of your hour-glass are slowly dribbling out. Your life is over; your race is run; you are about to take that great leap from time into eternity. While those around your bed are bending over you eagerly watching you, your soul is oblivious to its surroundings; it is struggling to shake itself

free from the meshes of the body. Your eyelid flutters, your pulse falters; there is the dampness of death on your brow, there is the chillness of death at your heart. The whole universe seems to be tumbling in ruins about your ears; your whole frame seems to be relapsing in throes and convulsions. You seem to be returning to that nothingness from which in the beginning you had been drawn. Already your senses have nearly failed you. Your familiar friends about your bed look like faint shadows of the night — thin, misty, ghostlike. They open their mouths to speak loving words; their voices sound like faint murmurings, as it were the whisperings of distant foliage, the sobbings of far off leaves on distant trees. For you the end has come. The death rattle is in your throat; the torpor of death is in your eye; the dying struggles have nearly subsided. The soul seems to have shaken itself free from the meshes, from the travails of the body, and it poises itself for a moment on the lips. And the priest says: “Go forth, Christian soul, from this life. Father, into thy hands we commend his spirit.” And the soul, as it were, poises its wings for flight. There is a last tremor of the pulse, a last flutter of the eyelid, a last throb of the heart, a last faint sigh, and then a pause. And then comes a sob, a gasp for breath and all is over. The soul has spread its wings and flown. It has shuffled off its mortal coil, it has shaken itself free from the travails of the body, it has flitted from its tenement of clay. The dead thing lying on the bed, stiffening already, was, a moment ago, a man; it is

now what? A clod of earth. We speak of the dead body not as "him," but as "it"!

2. Now turn your thoughts from the body of death, to the liberated, the separated soul. What a marvelous transformation has come over it; what a wonderful change it has gone through! A novel sense of buoyancy and freedom possesses it. It finds that it can pass from place to place with the freedom of thought, like lightning; it finds that it can think and will with startling clearness, and amazing rapidity, and singular swiftness. It begins to make trial of these new found powers; it begins to take stock of its fresh surroundings. It finds itself in the midst of a weird stillness, a tranquillity unbroken by the least breath of wind or by the least flicker of a leaf, alone in the ether, far beyond, as it were, the ken of earth, alone, alone in the tingling silence of eternity. Alone and yet not alone, — alone as regards the things of earth and of sense, but not alone in the noiseless realms of spirits; for the soul awakens,— we may call it an awakening — the soul awakens in the very presence of its Judge. The disembodied soul gathers together its startled faculties to find that the court is already convened, that the trial is already opened, that the indictment is already read, that the verdict is on the instant given; that the sentence is in the flash of an eye, carried into execution. What a marvellous scene? Surely there is no time for pause? But we, who in this mortal life, while we are trammelled by these bodies of ours, whilst we are fettered by the flesh, *we* must linger a little in order to

study and to think out the great tribunal at which the soul is arraigned.— Who then is the Judge? — The Man-God, Jesus Christ. The Scripture tells us that the Father judges no man; He hath committed all judgment to the Son! Then if it is our Lord, will He not be a kind and gentle Judge, meek, humble, tender, loving, eager to extenuate, anxious to forgive? No! In this life our Lord is indeed all that and more. In this life He is our Saviour, He is our Advocate, He is our Lover, but in the next life all that has passed away. In the present life, while we are in the body our Lord is to us rather the Man-God than the God-man. In the present life our Lord, as it were, hides the fiery Godhead behind the wall, or rather behind the veil of His gentle manhood. But when we stand at the dread tribunal, for you and for me the time of mercy has passed away, and the time of justice is upon us. In this life our Lord is a very Lamb, as He is pictured, but at the dread tribunal Christ is a very Lion. Pay your debt in this life, and Christ will accept your copper as gold thrice tried in the furnace, but delay your payment until the next life and Christ will exact from you the discharge of your debt down to the last farthing. And why? Because in this world we have always our Lord's merits to help us, but in the next life, when the time of mercy has gone and the time of justice has come, we must stand at the great bar alone, as we are unaided. Is it a wonder then that St. Peter asked, "If the good man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly, where shall the sinner appear?" You stand before God to be judged. Your angel

guardian and your patron saint are there, not so much as advocates, but rather now as impartial witnesses for you or against you. What do you say now? What would this testimony be as you are now? You know best. But whether they be witnesses against you, or whether they be splendid advocates in your behalf, one powerful witness you will certainly have against you. For, if we can picture it in this way, there will come a floating form looming in the ether, darkening the heavens, there will come a spectral figure, hot, hot from the abyss, reeking with the stench of Hell. Tainting the air with a loathsome presence, and circling around about, he will hover over you, and then closing his haughty pinions, he will alight by the side, he will alight with a mocking fiendish laugh by the side of the trembling soul whom he fills with horror and dismay. It is the Devil — Satan, traducer of the brethren, the accuser of souls — come to bear witness against you.

3. The Judge says to the soul: "Give an account of thy stewardship for now thou canst be steward no longer." And then the scroll of your conscience will be unrolled, and the secret record of your life will be laid bare for inspection. You know it has happened sometimes that men, even in this world, in a moment of deadly peril, have in the twinkling of an eye had their whole life in the minutest detail vividly pictured in their memory. Oh, then, how minute and how vivid will that picture be when the soul stands an unfettered spirit, free from the body, in the fierce light of that awful tribunal? In your conscience there will be written down every thought and word and work. You,

perhaps, had forgotten it, but it had been written down in indelible ink, and the breath of God will pass over the scroll and that forgotten record will become full, clear, distinct, perfect. And now with all these scenes paraded before your eyes, what will be your sentiments if you die a sinner, what will be the sentiments that will animate the sinner's soul? What horror when the secret chambers of your conscience are thus lit up by divine light, what shame to find loathsome sins lurking there, what pain to find your terrible degradation drawn forth for the inspection of God's eye! What alarm to find that even your good deeds are so flecked with imperfection; what anguish to think that all this tale of guilt, all this tale of sin, might have been washed away by one good confession! What embarrassment, when the tapestry of your life appears, not as you had shown it to the outer eye — fair and goodly to behold — but as it appears to the inner eye in all its rugged and tangled reality! How the sinner will shudder at his own picture, painted by his own conscience! You know great culprits in this world have sometimes been unable to bear any longer the guilt of their crimes that is weighing upon them, and of their own accord they have given themselves up to human justice. Then how intense will be the sinner's horror, shame and confusion when self contradicted he stands, stands there before God, self-convicted of black treason and lifelong rebellion! What answer will you make? What answer will you make when the charge is made against you? Will you try to deny the crimes? No, your own conscience is bearing witness against you. Will you try

to hide the crimes? How can you hide anything from God? God saw you in the very act of sinning. Will you excuse yourself that you had not grace enough to keep from sin? That would be an insult to the great God, and your own manifold graces would rise up and give you the lie — your Baptism and Confirmation, your Confessions and Communions, catechism instructions, sermons — the priest speaking God's truth in your heart. Then will you say, as men might say nowadays, that you had not time to serve God? Ah! the answer will come quickly. The law of human life was that you should serve God, that you came into this world for absolutely nothing else, nothing else but to serve God! Now think of how much time you have wasted in a service that was not God's; how many hours and days and weeks and months, perhaps years, you have frittered away in foolishness, you have squandered in folly, and for every wasted moment, for every idle word, you and I, we shall have to give a strict account at the dread tribunal. What excuse will you make? Or, perhaps in utter hopelessness you will flee from the face of your Judge. Whither would you flee? How can you flee from God? How can you flee from the immensity of God, for God is everywhere? You remember when holy David was turning over that thought, he said in his own beautiful way, addressing God: "Where shall I go from thy spirit or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, thou art present. If I arise early in the morning when no one is bestirring and hie me to the uttermost

bound of the sea, even there thy eye doth lead me and thy right hand doth uphold me. And I said perhaps the darkness will cover me, but darkness shall not be darkness to thee and the dark night is light as the light of day." Then, it may be, perhaps, in the rashness of your despair, you may raise your hand against God and strike your Judge down from His tribunal. Why not? Men hoisted the great God onto a Cross and did him to death there; why not tear Him down now from His judgment seat? You have challenged, defied, struck at God boldly enough in this life; then why not challenge, defy, strike at Him in the next life? Why not? Oh, is it not a humiliating thought? I must put it in this way: Poor, puny, pigmy man, why not?

4. Let me tell you a piece of history which illustrates why not. You remember it is told in Scripture that a great Eastern King in the folly and pride of his heart raised his hand in rebellion against Jehovah, the great God of Israel, and that God sent to revenge the insult. One angel — only one angel — did God send. Had he willed it He could have sent legions of battalions of splendid spirits, for Daniel has told us that even immediately around the throne of God thousands of thousands administer unto him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stand before Him and yet of this mighty host God sends only one. One was enough, and that one spirit did but spread his wings upon the place, and had but sped a silent flight over the camp of the Eastern King and did but lightly breathe upon his men at arms, and, as the Scripture tells

us in two places, when the morning sun arose it shone upon one hundred and eighty-five thousand Eastern warriors lying there with pale faces upturned to heaven,—lying there with glazed and staring eyes, lying there stiff, stark in death. Ah! how wonderful is the power of one angel! Then how wonderful, how unspeakable must be the power of the God of angels! And remember you will stand that day not defended by a great host, but alone. You will stand confronted by the Mighty God in Whose presence, as the prophet tells us, the mountains bow low and the earth and the sea flee before His face. Then what answer are you to make? What excuses are you to offer? Will you go back to human life and begin again? No! human life? Its gates are closed behind you for ever; you have had your day. Like a doomed city you are hemmed in and girdled about, and you cannot escape; if you have died in sin you cannot escape. Above you is an angry Judge about to condemn you; to your right hand stand your guardian angel and your patron saint — if you have died in sin the one veiling his face with angelic wings, the other with face averted and down-cast eyes, both in sadness and in sorrow. At your left hand stand accusing devils claiming you for their brother, for their comrade, mockingly triumphant at their success. Behind you is human life, to which you will never return; before you looms an eternity, an eternity of torture and woe. Beneath you gapes the abyss of Hell, yearning already to engulf you, and then is the clamor of awakened conscience and the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. There is no escape; you

must now listen to the sentence about to be pronounced against you — a sentence, if you have died in sin, a sentence of condemnation — of condemnation, I say — if you have died in sin. But our Lord is gentle and tender to the converted sinner. And it is for us a consoling thought that the day of judgment is for the converted sinner a day of joy. The Judge wears on that day the mild aspect of Jesus, Son of Mary, more radiant than when He stood face to face with Moses and Elias in the summit of Tabor, more sweetly smiling than when He said to the little children or to their mothers, “Suffer the little ones to come unto me”; — more tender than when He said to the penitent Magdalen, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”; — more consoling than when He said to the penitent thief,—“This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Our Lord will say to the repentant sinner: “Well done, thou faithful steward,— well done, good and faithful servants; thou hast sinned indeed, but thou hast repented of thy sin; thou hast erred indeed, but thou hast done penance for thy wandering. Well done, thou faithful steward! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, therefore I will place thee over many things for all eternity.” And then our Lord will take the converted sinner into his arms. In accents sweeter than the tone of angelic harpers, harping on their harps of gold, God will take the sinner into His arms, He will lead him amid the choirs of angels and blessed saints; He will introduce him into the halls of Heaven; He will pronounce that most consoling sentence, “Come, thou blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared

for thee from the foundation of the world.” Oh, may that be your destiny, may that be mine.

5. But to the impenitent sinner the face of the Judge will be the face of the great and terrible God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Whom the sinner in this life has challenged and defied — the great God Whom the sinner has spurned and despised. “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay.” The defiant creature is now in the grasp of the angry God and His anger is about to flash forth and destroy him. Oh, realize now in imagination what, if you die in sin, you will have to realize in awful fact. Realize what it must be to confront the angry, the omnipotent God. How can you stand it? How can you abide it? Do you remember that friendly manifestation — not angry, but friendly manifestation — of God to His Chosen People in the desert on Sinai when the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed and smoke went up from the mountain as from a great furnace, and no one dared to touch the mountain and the people quaked in fear and trembling? Do you remember again that other friendly manifestation, when Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus, and how at the sight that strong man, that future Apostle of the Gentiles, fell flat on the ground like a dead man? Do you remember again how Christ once appeared to John the Evangelist? — to John who had lived for three years in intimate society with our Lord, who had rested his head upon the heart of Christ; when our Lord appeared to him, the Apostle fell flat at the feet of Christ like a dead man. Oh! if these are the friendly manifestations of God,

what must it be to stand face to face with the angry God Whom you have spurned and insulted? What must it be to confront the omnipotent God at the very moment when the divine anger is about to flash forth and to condemn you forever? And so the awful sentence is pronounced, the doom falls upon the condemned soul, that sentence is uttered, that forever will ring in the ears of that miserable creature, that sentence, "Depart from me, you accursed soul, into everlasting fire." "Depart from me into fire!" Oh, you can imagine the condemned soul petrified with horror! "What?" he says. "Depart!—depart from the presence of God?" Now that the soul is free it realizes what God means. "Depart from the presence of the Infinite and Eternal Good of every rational soul? Depart from that one Good to attain which alone I was created — for my soul has hungered with a lifelong hunger and without which rest is impossible, happiness cannot be obtained? Depart from the source and origin of all happiness? What? Depart?—and depart forever? From God forever? Oh! where shall I betake myself, exile, outcast, wanderer that I am? Not surely from God forever?—away, not only from God but also into fire!—away from God forever into unquenchable fire! Oh! God, why was I born? Oh! better that I had never looked upon the light of day! Oh! better, ten thousand times, before sin had thus scarred my soul and made it hideous in the sight of God, better that a millstone had been bound about my neck and that my own mother had flung me into the deep sea! Oh! surely it cannot

be! There must be some mistake. Oh! God, think who I am. I have been Catholic, I have gone to Mass, I have sometimes gone to Confession, I have sometimes received Communion; I have been a man of position, looked up to with much awe, admired and even loved. The newspapers are talking about me even in my death. Surely there must be some mistake? I am not to be damned forever? Is there not some mistake?" No, poor unfortunate soul, there is no mistake. You have died in mortal sin, unrepented, unconfessed, unforgiven, and now just as well might the storm-tossed mariner plead for pity of the surging ocean lashed by a wintry hurricane into boisterous fury as you may now move the unswerving Judge to pity. In the world you spurned, despised, forgot God, and now the punishment has come upon you — "Depart from God into fire!" *And then* the sentence is at once executed. Victorious devils seize their prey, triumphant demons hurry him down, down, down — into the nether abyss of fire, and as the helpless soul draws nigh, in the twinkling of an eye, draws nigh to the portals of Hell, he hears the solemn roar and the innumerable murmurings of the damned and tortured spirits, caged demons, and condemned souls, and through the bars of the prison house he catches sight of appalling faces of white despair that freeze his blood to look at. And all this forever! This is his home that he has chosen forever; these are his companions forever — where there is no goodness, no beauty, no virtue, no compassion for others, no respect for self — where there is unceasing weeping and gnashing of teeth at the in-

credible folly that for the pleasures, the filthy pleasures of this life he has bartered away unending Heaven for unending Hell. This is his home, these are his companions that he has chosen forever, to be linked forever with all that is evil, to be huddled into a chamber, and there salted with fire — in the terrible language of the Scripture — and there salted with fire so long as God shall be God. And so the judgment is done, the sentence is given, and the verdict is at once executed. It has taken time to express it; it took no time to transact it. Holy Job says so well, “the wicked spend their days in pleasure,” and then, in a moment, in a moment, they go down to hell. So quickly has it all been done that as the devils hurry the poor soul forth from the chamber of death, he catches one momentous glimpse of that human life that he loved so well, and which he is now leaving forever. He catches sight of his own body, his own dead body, and he sees the priest still, and hears him say, “He has just breathed his last, may his soul rest in peace!” His friends around the bed of death hardly realize that he is dead, and already he has been examined, judged and condemned. “May his soul rest in peace!” Oh, what peace is there for one doomed to pass eternity in unquenchable fire? And as the poor soul is hurried forth, in the chamber of death he catches a last sight of that body for which he has thus suffered. He catches sight of it, already stiffening in the bed of death, and he wonders and is all amazed, and for all eternity he will weep and gnash his teeth, that to gratify the gross tastes of that clod of earth, to satisfy

the selfish longings of that lump of clay, to beautify that body — that body of death which his own best friends are making haste to hurry away — and to huddle underground — to satisfy, I say, the selfish longings, and the brutish passions of that pale dead thing, in few days to melt away into rottenness and seething corruption, for that thing he has for all eternity separated his soul from God, he has for all eternity separated his soul from the joys of Heaven; for that thing he has chosen for companions, devils and the doomed souls in Hell, where he shall remain so long as God shall be God.

6. O my dearest brethren, let me conjure you, by the mercy of Jesus Christ, to reflect seriously on these terrifying truths. Let the sound of the last trumpet echo frequently in your ears. Let the memory of the last and bitter day of wrath possess your souls constantly and excite you to a sincere and speedy repentance for your past sins, before the gates of mercy are closed. Let it inspire you with a fixed resolution to prevent the terrors of God's justice by a virtuous life, and to prepare for a favorable judgment before the time of grace and salvation is at its end. The very thought of the last judgment has frequently wrought wonderful conversions in Christianity; numberless sinners have been thereby reclaimed from vice, and roused out of the fatal lethargy of sin; and some of the most illustrious saints have been incited to redouble their fervor, and to work out their salvation in a holy fear and trembling. Oh, would that I could inspire you with like happy sentiments! Oh, would that I

could animate the just to perseverance, and mollify the hearts of sinners into tears of compunction. But this is the work of Thy all-powerful grace, O sweetest Jesus. We prostrate ourselves, therefore, at the feet of Thy mercy, and most humbly implore the assistance of Thy grace. Vouchsafe to look upon this congregation with an eye of pity, and do not suffer Thy Precious Blood to be shed for any of us in vain. Grant, we beseech Thee, that Heaven may rejoice at our conversion, and that we may, on the last day, be of the happy number of those who are invited to enjoy the bliss of Heaven, with these consoling words: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, and possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen.

SERMON XII

HELL

“Gather the tares together, and bind them into bundles to burn.”—MATTH. 13, 30.

Our Divine Saviour, in the portion of the Gospel which I just now read to you, compares the kingdom of Heaven, that is, His Church on earth, to a field sowed with good seed which produces good wheat. But intermixed with the good grain are pernicious tares and weeds, and thus the good and the bad grow side by side until the harvest time, when the good is separated from the bad, and gathered into granaries, and the tares and weeds are bound up into bundles and cast into fire to burn. St. Augustine uses this parable to prove that in the Church of Jesus Christ there will always be good and bad, just and unjust, vessels of election and children of perdition, intermixed together, until the end of the world, when the dreadful separation will take place and the just and faithful servants of God like unto a good rich crop are to be carried by angels into the mansions of eternal bliss; and the wicked like unto noxious weeds shall be gathered together and cast into Hell to burn forever. Such is the sad fate of sinners who, being called to the kingdom of Heaven, render themselves unworthy of so great a blessing by the immorality of their lives.

Such is the unhappy lot of those wicked Christians who abandon themselves to vice, and neglect the practice of virtue. They shall be cast into exterior darkness, forever deprived of the light of glory and the sight of God. They shall be plunged into an abyss of perpetual night where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; where they shall suffer the most excruciating torments for all eternity. Their misery will always begin, but never end; it will be as lasting as eternity. May God in His mercy preserve us here present from an experimental knowledge of these terrifying truths, and from being condemned to such terrible torments.

If we reflect on the terrible torments of Hell as frequently as we should, eternal fire and everlasting misery would not be the lot of so many. We shall therefore meditate upon this truth this evening according to the warning of the Holy Ghost: "Let them go down alive to hell"; go down in thought into Hell during life, that you may not have to go there after death. Holy Job practised this lesson when he said: "Hell is my place of abode, and I have made for myself a bed in this abyss of darkness." Let us then approach this mansion of horror and misery; let us enter into it, if possible with the same sentiments which the damned now have, of its insupportable torments. But who can comprehend, says St. Augustine, what a damned soul comprehends? Who can form, by the most profound meditation, the same idea which a lost soul has of its unhappy lot in the midst of Hell's devouring flames? Let us at any rate endeavor to form to ourselves such an idea as will convince us

“how terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God.”

1. The first and essential torment of Hell is the loss of God, the loss of the face to face vision of God. In this life we do not understand what it is to lose God; we are darkened by sin; we are held down by earthly affections; we are dominated by objects of sense. And just as we cannot define what God is, so neither can we define that pain which is the loss of God. We can only say that it is by far the greatest of every conceivable pain,—by far the greatest, for a loss is measured by the value of the object known to be lost, and God Himself can neither give nor take away any object so great or so valuable as Himself. So it is that the just soul is called blessed —“Come, thou blessed”—because its capacity for happiness is filled to the very brim. And on the other hand, the wicked soul, the damned soul, is called cursed —“Depart, thou cursed!” Why? Because its capacity for misery is filled to the very brim. That is contained in the terrible sentence: “Depart from Me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire.” Depart from God! Depart into fire! God’s anger is so great that it will fill every power and faculty of the accursed soul, fill it to the very brim, fill it with agony and torment for all eternity. And so in studying this pain of loss, we shall perhaps get a clearer idea of it, if we study the faculties of the condemned soul.

And so let us look into the imagination of the lost soul. The imagination of the lost soul is accursed. That faculty will in imagination transport the accursed

soul into the realms of Heaven, and it will set him on the battlements — as the Scripture says, fashioned of jasper — of the court of Heaven. There it will portray to him the joy, the peace, the beauty, the happiness, the wisdom, the unending duration of Heaven — Heaven, that palace of unspeakable delight; Heaven, that worthy dwelling place of the mighty God, King of kings, and Lord of lords; Heaven, where there is no spot or blemish, where there is no change or decay; Heaven, which is so beautiful that it passes human imagination, surpasses human dreams; where dwells the crowning work of creation; the very masterpiece of creation, the perfect gem of God's handiwork — the crowning beauty of the Humanity of Jesus Christ; Heaven, where is needed neither the light of lamp nor of the sun, for God Himself enlightens it. And here the imagination of the accursed soul will paint to him the glorious picture of the multitudinous angels and saints standing forever around the great white throne of God, clad in white robes and with palm branches in their hands; and with bitter, bitter jealousy the damned soul will watch their joyous faces from which all tears have been wiped away forever. The poor lost soul watches them, and he sees that they are perfect beings now, each one in his own degree — perfect in intellect, perfect in will, perfect in every well-regulated passion. And as he watches them there falls on his ear the burden of a mighty chorus as the blessed in the joy of their hearts join together in voices which, as the Scripture says, are sweet as the voices of angelic harpers, harping on their harps of gold, chant-

ing together magnificent canticles to the great god, crying together: "Hosannah, Hosannah, to Him that sitteth upon the throne!" And the lost soul will reflect that all this happiness is ever fresh, never-fading, unending, undimmed by cloud of doubt so long as God shall be God. And then watching the bands of the blessed, he catches sight among them of his own friends, of his own relatives,— father, it may be, or mother, or brother, or sister, wife or child, and with intense bitterness of soul, he remarks that no pity or regard for him ruffles their happiness, or troubles their everlasting calm. Him they remember not, or if they do remember him, it is to give glory to God who has banished him, for his ungrateful, disloyal conduct,— and again in bitterness of soul the damned soul will reflect that all their happiness — this indescribable happiness might have been his. There he will see a glorious throne once set for him; it was meant for him, and now it has been assigned to another — perhaps already it is filled by another. All this happiness was meant for him. For that he was born — for that alone he was born,— for that alone he came into the world, to that alone he was called and that alone with a little trouble he might have made his own. But no, he has flung it away — all, and forever. It has gone forever; he has banished himself forever from the presence of God; he has condemned himself forever to unquenchable fire, and for what? Oh, that question keeps recurring to his mind, and for all eternity it shall recur — for what? — for what? — for what? What has he taken in exchange? He has lost it all, and what

has he got in return? The filthy pleasure of an hour, a pleasure that polluted in the very tasting, the after-flavor, the after-savor of which was bitterness, a life-long remorse. Then the poor soul in rage and in anguish, with weeping and with gnashing of teeth, will fall back upon himself, and that terrible prophecy in him will be fulfilled that the sinner shall see and shall be enraged, he shall weep and shall gnash his teeth. And so the faculty of imagination does its work as the avenger of God.

2. And then Conscience rises up against him — Conscience of fearful fury, pitiless and unrelenting, presenting to the mind's eye picture after picture of himself, painted in his true colors, portraying him as he is to the life, exactly as he is, dripping with corruption within and without, polluted in body, sin-soaked in soul — repulsive in his own eyes, hateful to God, — odious to Heaven, — abominable, an abomination even to his own degraded associates in Hell. Ah, yes, Conscience is that silent worm that crawls over, crawls over the accursed of God, as, shackled hand and foot, he lies bound down, *bound down* in fetters of steel in the fiery vaults of Hell. That worm of Conscience fastens and feeds voraciously on his soul; it ransacks his very vitals, it burrows into the marrow of his immortal substance, ever gnawing, yet never destroying. It is a daily and unspeakable torment. Night and day, according to that singular and thrice repeated expression of Our Divine Lord, the worm dieth not.

And then when the imagination and conscience have

done their work as God's avengers, then there will rise up a faculty of *will* that will arm itself to fierce war against the enemy of God. The faculty of the will, it will chafe the man, it will chafe the condemned soul with an unspeakable eagerness for the possession of God Whom he knows he can never gain. Yes, it will drive him towards God. And yet he knows that he never will be able to attain unto God. For all eternity he will have to stand not face to face with God, but face to face with the Devil. His will drives him to love God and yet he knows that he never can possess God. The heart of man was made for God and it can find no lasting rest except in God. The soul separated from the body understands that God is its Sovereign Good and that it has been created for Him. *Let the heart* place its bliss in any object, what suspense and anxiety till it reach it, what suffering if it be forever precluded from it. Such disappointment is known to make men mad.

God of the soul! its Maker and Final Destiny, its only Bliss, Whose loss is eternal misery! Never to behold the glory of the Godhead! Never to know the wisdom of the Son! Never to share the love of the Holy Ghost! To be separated, and forever, from union with God, from the company of the angels, and the elect of the sons of men! To be excluded from the enjoyment of Heaven! To endure forever this privation made even more dreadful by the physical torments of Hell! To hunger and thirst for the Supreme Good and never to be satiated! To pass eter-

nity in self-reproach and soul-piercing regrets. To be forever the victim of bitterest remorse and withering despair! Annihilation would be a boon.

3. But this is not the only punishment of the damned souls. Sensible torments, the most violent, the most intense, and the most acute, increase their pains beyond expression. We have a frightful idea given us of those torments in the sentence which Jesus Christ will pronounce on the day of judgment against the reprobate: "Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Is there any torture so dreadful in itself as to be burned alive with a raging fire? Of all the elements, the most active and penetrating is fire. Of all torments the worst and most intolerable is that caused by fire. The hardest stones and metals, steel and iron, brass and copper, silver and gold, are melted by the heat of fire, and made like a flowing stream. To be burned alive, singed with burning torches, torn with red-hot pincers, and roasted on burning coals were the worst tortures inflicted either by criminal judges on offenders, or by tyrants on the martyrs of Christ, who gave their blood for the faith. When we hear of any one being burned alive, does not the bare recital make us tremble? When we read of some of the holy martyrs being cast into cauldrons of boiling oil, or extended on glowing gridirons and burning coals, do we not shudder at the very thought of it? If the picture be so frightful and terrifying what must the real torment be? Fire is the most rigorous punishment that human justice can inflict for the most atrocious crimes, and when Al-

mighty God resolved to extirpate the infamous inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, He caused showers of fire to descend from heaven on these unfortunate cities. But this fire was only a slight prelude to the eternal flames of Hell, every other fire being no more than a painted fire in comparison to it, St. Augustine says.

Now if our earthly fire causes such pain, that one may not hold his finger in the flame of a wax candle for three minutes; who of us shall be able to dwell in the midst of the raging flames of Hell, compared to which all our fire is but a shadow? And yet the reprobate man shall be burned in this flame; that is, he shall be covered and surrounded with it on all sides, and shall have to remain so for all eternity. Holy Writ always represents this fire for us, by most terrible pictures, and by the awful effects it produces; it is a place where a fiery shower falls from above like a stream on the damned, and inundates them from below: "Burning coals shall fall upon them; thou wilt cast them down into fire." Elsewhere it is described as a madly rushing torrent, which drowns the wicked in its foaming and raging waves: "The breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it." Again it is likened to a fierce dragon that bites, tears and devours: "Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire, in the time of thy anger: the Lord shall trouble them in His wrath and fire shall devour them." Our dear Saviour uses a strange mode of expression.

After having exhorted us rather to cut off the hand or foot, or to tear out the eye that might lead us into

sin and thus to enter blind and lame into Heaven, rather than having eyes, hands and feet to be hurled into Hell, He adds these wonderful words: "For the wicked shall be salted with fire." That is to say, as fish that is salted in a barrel is so completely penetrated by the salt that no part of it remains unsalted, so also they who are condemned to Hell shall be tormented by fire, not merely on the surface of their bodies, but in every part of them. They shall be *salted with fire*. Oh! woe to the sinner who is now given up to carnal sins, if thou dost not timely penance, thou shalt one day be a burning coal in this fire; that body of thine corrupted by the filth of foul passions shall be completely penetrated by an intolerable heat, that will pierce thee through like a glowing iron; thy flesh shall be roasted, the marrow in thy bones melted, thy brain shall boil and seethe in thy head, and like the iron bull that Phalaris invented to be heated from the outside with burning coals, nothing but flames of fire shall burst forth from thy mouth, and nose and eyes and ears. Thus shalt thou be in Hell, salted with fire, surrounded by fire, above, below, on the right hand and on the left, inside and outside; thou shalt be more fire than the fire itself! O fire! what a terrible torment thou are! O fire of Hell, O eternal fire of Hell, what am I now to think and say of thee!

To burn in fire is a fearful torment, but it is still tolerable; it is the lot of even the chosen friends and children of God, the poor souls in purgatory, and indeed they endure the fire with the utmost patience and love of God. Yes, but the suffering soul in purgatory

knows that its delirium of woe will one day end, to be exchanged for the ravishing vision of God. Ah, but for Hell there is no alteration, no intermission, no mitigation, no hope,—it is eternal, unending, everlasting. This is the crown and climax of Hell. Well might our Lord in face of that thought, well might He proclaim to the world that there forever shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. I have often thought that we ought all to take that word and write it up somewhere that it might always be before our eyes, and we would be less careless of our soul's salvation. We are most thoughtful of the life of the body, of this body, the mortal body, which is ever dying from the cradle onwards; we are most thoughtless of the life of our immortal soul, of that soul which can never die. To save his mortal life in the hour of peril what tremendous efforts a man will make, what determination, what decision he will display! To lengthen out the little span of human existence, what sacrifice is there that he will not bear, what precaution is there that he will not take? He will try every remedy, he will submit to every privation. What an immense anxiety to lengthen out a life that of its very nature is fleeting and of brief duration. And yet of the life of the soul, of the life that knows no ending, either of punishment, or of reward, we are so thoughtless. We all live as though our neighbors, of course, were going to die—that is evident enough—but as if we were immortal, obviously and notoriously immortal, as if we obviously and notoriously were going to live on earth forever.

4. Man has forgotten that he was made for eternity — for absolutely nothing else but for eternity — and while he is thinking out and maturing his paltry little plans eternity is rushing upon him. The faster he lives, the faster eternity draws nigh. His little life is slipping behind him into a forgotten past, an eternity is looming ahead, every day larger, and more real, and yet man is blind to its approach. He is like a traveler on a misty mountain, walking rapidly to the gulf of destruction. He is like an ox with bandaged eyes, in its fury hurrying fast towards the shambles where it is to die. Every night the grim enemy Death is pitching his tent twenty-four hours nearer to that wretched sinner's door. Death as our Lord repeated it — not once but time after time — He said it, — Death is stealing upon him "like a thief in the night," silently but certainly, and on a sudden, in the twinkling of an eye, it may be, he will be launched into eternity. Hurlled into eternity — forever to suffer, never to be released — forever to suffer, never to be redeemed, and for all eternity unchanging, everlasting. Yes, the eternity of Hell is unchanging at least in all essential features. It is without diminution, without intermission; it is ever green, never fading. The sun will rise and set its thousands of years, its billions of centuries, it may be; the tides will ebb and flow, the seasons will come and go; the generations of men will be born, they will flourish, and they will rot, and last of all the universe itself will collapse and tumble into ruins and totter in confusion. But there will be no change in Hell, no destruction, no alteration, no alleviation, no mitigation,

no abatement of the suffering, no diminution in the anger of God. Take some soul who perhaps has been already many centuries in Hell — take for example that Baltasar, King of Babylon — that haughty king of Babylon — who, you will remember, in the midst of his proud banquetting when he had stolen the golden vessels from the Temple of Jerusalem and was desecrating them at his great feast, was weighed in the balance and found wanting. Twenty-five centuries have passed away since the mystic hand came and wrote his death warrant on the palace walls — two thousand and five hundred years have passed away since the hand of God smote him. His body and the bodies of his children's children have long ago mouldered into forgotten dust. His lineage has perished, his nation is destroyed, the high walls of Babylon are now mere heaps of rubbish. The very sight of that once gorgeous city is now a dismal swamp; and yet even as I speak, even as you listen, now, just as when the portals of Hell first closed upon him, the Chaldean king endures unchanged the same intensity of torment, the same gnawing of the worm that dieth not, the same braziers of unslaked and unslacking fire fanned by the breath of an angry God. Oh, the everlastingness of Hell! — dwell upon that thought! Hell is of unending duration, without measure, not to be estimated. Try, if you will, to measure and gauge the unending duration of Hell; you will find that you will neither conceive, nor imagine what the eternity of Hell may mean. Let God give you the intellect of Cherub or Seraph; let God give you the mathematical power to

count and add together, let us say, all the sands on the great seashore, all the drops of the great ocean, all the stars as they shine on a frosty night in the firmament of heaven. Take that mighty total, and let each unit of it represent a century — one hundred years — of the unspeakable torment of Hell. Baltasar, king of Babylon, so far will have cancelled only twenty-five units of that gigantic sum of centuries, and yet that unspeakable roll of ages at last will be unfolded, and yet the sufferer in Hell will be no nearer to the edge of eternity, not so much as by one poor fraction of a second than at the first hour when the fire first scorched him, and the flames first burned into his soul.

Try again to realize and appreciate the duration of the punishment of Hell. *Let us suppose* that God permitted some damned spirit to come forth from the vaults of Hell once — once only — in a hundred years, and once in each century to deposit one single drop of water — one drop — on some dry and barren globe as vast as this earth which we inhabit — one drop in one century, one drop in each hundred years. What æons of time, what endless time must elapse before these drops could mingle into a little pool big enough to fill the hollow of a man's hand. Baltasar, king of Babylon, in his twenty-five centuries of suffering would not yet have accumulated water enough to mirror and reflect the pale and haggard face of that once proud king of Babylon, and yet these drops might grow into a runlet and the runlet might develop into a stream, and the stream might expand into a broad and ample river,

and the river grow into a mighty ocean, deep and vast with great billows washing over mountain peaks — and when drop by drop, century by century, drop by drop, the whole globe had once again been drained dry — Oh! is it not an awful thought that the toiler from Hell would be no nearer to the verge of eternity — not so much as by a single throb of his pulse — than at the first hour when he laid the first drop on the dry and thirsty earth! Nay the sands of the sea, the stars of the heavens, the drops that make up the great ocean, vast as the proportion is, can be counted and measured, because there is a number, if you could find it out, there is a number that will measure them, but you cannot count and measure the days and years of eternity. And why not? Because a measure and a number suppose a beginning and an end, and eternity has no end — it is endless, it is of unending duration, and at any point of it, choose where you like — now or a billion centuries hence — you would find the same intensity of suffering, the same torments, the same tears never to be wiped away; in our Lord's awful words, the same "gnawing of the worm that dieth not," the same "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

5. And now let me ask you just for a moment: compare the eternity as far as we can make some little effort to grasp it, compare this eternity of punishment with the few years of forbidden pleasures the sinner loved here upon earth. When the billion centuries of eternity have rolled away the sufferer in Hell will look back on his life on earth hardly able to remember it,

just as we cannot or hardly can remember the years of our early childhood. You may have noticed a bird of passage making its way to some distant land, cleaving its flight, its rapid flight, towards the horizon until as you watch it in the blue of heaven it disappears, or rather it vanishes to a speck which you can hardly perceive. So will it be with the damned soul in Hell, gazing back down the avenue of the centuries of eternity to that little point of human life wherein was wrought the work whereof this eternal chastisement is the wages, and forever in anguish and despair the man will marvel at the choice which he then made, for he had his choice. Yes, he had his choice, God on the one hand, the creature on the other, and he professed to weigh God and the creature in the scales, and in the blindness of his folly, he professed to find the good God, the Creator, wanting, but the creature good measure and running over. He had his choice, and he rejected God and chose the creature. He knew full well the wrong he was doing to God; he knew well that he was the property and possession of God; he knew that everything that he was — every fibre of his body, every faculty of his soul — came from God, and therefore belonged to God. And yet — for that is what mortal sin means — he folded his arms, and looked the great God in the face, and deliberately and calmly said in effect to God: “Non serviam,— I will not serve Thee!” No, he would not serve God; he would serve the Devil instead! And serve the Devil for all eternity! — The world taught him to gratify

his passions until he became their slave, and then they turned upon him — he became their prey, and like wild beasts they wounded and tortured him. The world taught him to forget God — and to seek to gratify himself alone. The world taught him to deal hard in search of a fortune, and he found it not. He found only an hour's pleasure, but an eternity of pain! Eternity of torments! *Who* can stand an hour's agony, who can stand an hour's burning, who could lie for a week in one position without feeling as if it would never end? A night spent in a fever seems interminable, and to the sufferer the light of day would seem to never come; hours become days, days become years to him who bears the fearful pains of some dreadful malady. How if these torments, unrelieved by death, were to last for years, for centuries, till the end of the world! But we sink beneath the thought of suffering which even such pains as this life can inflict, for eternity. And yet these pains are not to be compared with the torments of the damned. When shall all this be? Perhaps this very year, perhaps this very week, perhaps this very day, nay my God! it may be this very hour. We know not when; we may be even this very moment on the brink of Hell.

Eternity! Eternity! Be thy thought ever with us to remind us that this human life is but a point, compared with eternal duration that follows it. Eternity of happiness, be thou ever present to the mind of the good as an incentive to his perseverance in virtue. Eternity of suffering, be thou never absent from the

mind of the sinner to intimidate him from sin and to lead him back to the path of pardon. Eternal Hell, be thy remembrance ever with us to remind us of divine justice when less constraining motives shall have lost their effects. Amen.

SERMON XIII

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

"The dust shall return into its earth from whence it was, and the spirit to God who gave it."—ECCLES. 12, 7.

One of the great ends which the Church proposes to herself in the observance of the Lenten seasons is to excite within our minds the consideration and the desire of our immortality. Surrounded as we are by so many miseries — subject to so many humiliating infirmities — condemned to the sad necessity of dying — what hope could be more precious to us than the hope of another and better life, in which we shall be released from sin and suffering and death forever? And yet — how many men are insensible to this blessed hope — how many are enemies of their own immortality.

Of all the delusions in the world, the most terrible, and that which inspires the greatest fear, is that which whispers sweetly in the ear: "You are in the world simply to be happy." Why then should you wish to dig your grave before your time, watering it with your tears and travail? Why not pluck the flower of pleasure ere it withers and falls, for by and by death will come, and after death nothingness.

This is the perpetual temptation of man, his greatest danger. And many unfortunately listen to this lan-

guage, and turning all their thoughts earthwards, close the door of their hearts to every noble aspiration, and seek felicity in mere earthly enjoyment.

The impious and stupid words of modern atheists, that man resembles the brute in his whole being, robs him of all his nobility, of all his grandeur, of all his glory, and is at once an absurdity and a blasphemy.

There is in man a something that knows not death, that survives the putrid tenant of the sepulchre; and this something is the soul that breaks from the chains of the body and flies to God Who made it immortal.

The truth of the immortality of the soul is a fundamental one, important, most necessary. And this will form the subject of our consideration this evening.

1. God alone is *absolutely* immortal, without beginning and without end. "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and end," saith the Lord God, "who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." But the Eternal, Immortal God, spoke His eternal thought in time to nothingness, and creation was effected, and "His spirit moved over the waters." In time He said: "Let us make man to our image and likeness;" and the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Let us now contemplate this living soul, man. What a strange contrast is presented by his physical and spiritual natures. In a mortal body he carries an immortal spirit. In this perishable mass resides an imperishable spirit. Within this frail, tottering temple shines a light that will always burn, that will never be extinguished.

As to the past, we are creatures of yesterday; as to the future, we are everlasting. When this house of clay shall have crumbled to dust: when this earth shall have passed away; when the sun and stars shall grow dim with years, even then our souls will live and think, remember and love, for God breathed into us a living spirit, and that spirit, like Himself, is clothed with immortality.

2. What then is the soul of man? The soul is a spiritual substance; it is that which constitutes the excellence and dignity of man. It is the principle by which we live and move and have our being. It is that which forms and perpetuates our dignity; for it makes us to be the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The soul has intellectual conceptions, and aspirations of reason and judgment independent of material organs. Our own experience clearly teaches us this important point. Our mind grasps what the senses cannot reach. We think of God and His attributes, we have thoughts of justice and of truth. We know the difference between good and evil. Such a principle being independent of matter in its operations must needs be independent of matter also in its being. It is, therefore of its nature subject to no corruption resulting from matter. Its life, which is its being, is not extinguished and cannot be extinguished with that of the body.

It is well known that there is constant waste going on in every part of the human body, which must be renovated by daily nutriment. So steady is this exhaustion, that in the judgment of medical science, an entire transformation of the physical system occurs

every six or eight years. New flesh and bones and tissues are substituted for those which you had before. The hand with which you write, the brain which you exercise in thinking are composed entirely of different materials. And yet you comprehend to-day what you have learned ten years ago, you remember and love those with whom you were then associated. How is this? You no longer use the identical organic substances which you then possessed. It proves that the faculty called the soul, by which you think, remember and love, is distinct from organic matter; that while the body is constantly changing the soul remains unchanged, that it does not share in the process of decomposition and renewal through which the human frame is passing, and consequently that it is a spiritual substance. God has inscribed in our rational nature His moral law, commanding us to do good and abstain from wrong, and as an infinite, wise and just and holy Legislator, He must have safeguarded His law with a perfect sanction. But, there is not such a perfect sanction in this life, therefore the soul must exist after death.

3. Our own conscience gives us the most intimate and perfect assurance that we are under such a moral law. The study of the laws, literature, religions of various nations of the world, investigations into the customs, and moral ideas of savage tribes, all conspire to afford irresistible evidence of the universality of ethical conceptions which reveal the moral law. But without a sufficient sanction, such a law would obviously be incomplete and inadequate: and *therefore* in-

compatible with the character of a perfect, just and wise Lawgiver.

That a sufficient sanction is not found in this life, is a fact of common observation. The goods and ills of this world are often distributed inversely in proportion to desert. Many self-sacrificing virtuous men meet with continuous suffering and trial during the whole course of their lives, whilst many wicked men have enjoyed prosperity up to their last moments.

Now, this cannot be the final outcome of life. And God being just and holy cannot permit this. He cannot allow that it be ultimately better for those who break His law, who violate the precepts of reason, and degrade that nature in which they are like unto Him, than for those who seek to observe His commandments and conform their conduct to the Archtype of holiness.

Therefore, there must be a future existence of the soul, in which the present deficiencies of the practical order shall be set aright.

4. The *will* of man demonstrates the immortality of the soul. The *will* may be tempted by gold, deceived by the image of glory, but conquered where she *wills* to resist — *never*. Man alone bears the impress of duty, and exercises his privileges with an authority, which no other authority can abridge. In vain do savage monsters confide in their strength; he subjugates them by the might of reason alone. In vain does the earth conceal the precious metals which his industry demands within the depths of its mines; he tears them from its lowest depths, to fashion them to all his wants. In vain does the sea moan and heave its angry waves

to heaven; he compels it to submit to his will, and despite its murmurs, to bear him to the farthest limits of the globe. And when forces are arrayed against him, when his life is menaced, the free *will* of the righteous soul cries out: I will not, I cannot offend my God:

“The soul secure in her existence smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crush of worlds.”

5. But there are times in our lives when this truth is brought home to us most vividly. When you gaze on the lifeless form of one dear to you, of father, of mother, wife, brother or friend; when you see the face that used to smile on you with so much benignity turn pale; when you see that dying glance that used to be fixed on you with so much love and interest; when you gaze on those lips now closed in death, but whose words were sweet music to your ears; when you hear around you weeping, and the echo of the sorrowful strain: “He is dead, he is dead,” can you say all is now over; I shall see him no more? Far from it. Our hearts rebel at such a thought. And we shall be convinced of seeing our dear ones in another and more beautiful life. Were it not so, we could say to God: “Thou hast deceived me, for Thou hast given me a false hope, a love which has belied itself.”

Were everything to end with the grave, our life

would be a hell, an infamy, always tormented and so short withal. Charity and friendship would be nothing more than illusions; truth and justice would be but chimeras. And who could think such a thing, and not suffocate the noblest instincts of the heart :

“ Hope springs eternal in the human breast :
Man never is, but *always* to be blest :
The soul uneasy, as continued from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.”

6. Hence it is that belief in the immortality of the soul is found among every people ; it is an article of the creed of all humanity. All nations, both ancient and modern, whether professing the true or false religion, have believed in the immortality of the soul, how much soever they may have differed as to the nature of the future rewards and punishment, or mode of future existence.

The form indeed varies, but the belief is the same the world over. And God willed to carve the word immortality in the very depths of the soul, and to make it a torch whose light should gleam through the blackest darkness of barbarism.

On the arid coasts of Africa, the ferocious Hottentot asks that in death his arrows and bow be placed by his grave that he may be able to fight in the land of souls ; and savages believe that they hear in the sighing of the winds the souls of their dear ones.

We may find indeed a man here and there who pretends to deny the existence of a future life. But, like the fool that says in his heart “ there is no God,” this man’s wish is father to his thought ; for if there is in

the life to come a place of retribution, he feels that it will be so much the worse for him.

We must therefore conclude that a sentiment so deep rooted and general must have been planted in the human heart by Almighty God, just as He has implanted in us instinctive love for truth and justice and inveterate hatred of falsehood and injustice.

7. But mankind has not only a firm belief in the immortality of the soul, there is inborn in every human heart a desire for perfect happiness. Happiness! This is the word that moves the heart. This desire is so strong in man that it is the mainspring of all his actions, the engine that keeps in motion the machinery of society. Even when he commits acts that lead him to misery, he does so under the mistaken notion that he is consulting his own happiness.

Now, God would never have planted in the human heart this craving after perfect felicity, unless He intended that the desire should be fully gratified; for He never designed that man should be the sport of vain and barren hopes. He never creates anything in vain; but He would have created something to no purpose if He had given us the thirst for perfect bliss without imparting to us the means of assuaging it. As He has given us bodily eyes to see and enjoy the objects of nature around us, so has He given to us an interior perspective of immortal bliss, that we may yearn for it now and enjoy it hereafter.

It is clear that this desire for perfect happiness never is, and never can be fully realized in the present life.

Now, if God has given us a desire for perfect felic-

ity, which He intends one day to be fully gratified, and if this felicity cannot be found in the present life, it must be reserved for the time to come. And as no intelligent being can be contented with any happiness that is finite in duration, we must conclude that it will be eternal, and that, consequently, the soul is immortal. Life that is not crowned with immortality is not worth living.

Without the hope of immortality, the condition of man is less desirable than that of the beast of the field.

“Or own the soul immortal or invert
All order. Go mock majesty! Go man!
And bow to thy superiors of the stall.
Through every scene of sense superior far;
They graze the turf untilled; they drink the stream
Unbrewed, and ever full and unembittered
With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs.”

These lines of the poet tersely express what man would be were his soul not immortal. The brutish beast seeks and finds its pleasure in this life, man seeks but finds it not. We may well exclaim, then, with St. Augustine: “Thou hast made us, O God, for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they repose in Thee.”

This tendency of human nature is clearly and beautifully set forth in the following lines of Addison:

“It must be so. Plato, thou reason'st well!
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality,
Or whence this secret dread, or inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?”

'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
 'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
 And intimates eternity to man.
 Eternity! Thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
 Through what new scenes and changes must we pass!
 The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me
 But shadows, clouds and darkness rest upon it.
 Here will I hold. If there is a power above us,
 (And that there is, all nature cries aloud,
 Through all its works) He must delight in virtue;
 And that which He delights in must be happy."

8. Yes, my brethren, there is a future life, and we are made immortal to enjoy it. The blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ put an end to all our speculative reasonings; and places the seal of divine authority upon our conclusions. "You err not knowing the Scriptures of the power of God," said He, to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the body. "For in the resurrection there shall be neither marriage nor giving in marriage; but ye shall be as angels of God in Heaven." "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for those who love him." As well might one born blind attempt to picture to himself the beauty of the landscape, as for the eye of the soul to contemplate the supernal bliss that awaits the righteous in what is beautifully called the land of the living.

Yes, existence begins in this life, but ends not here. This life is but the bud, the spring, the source of our eternal being. It is not for this life that we have been made. Whether our immortality will be happy or miserable, rests with ourselves. It rests with ourselves whether we shall be, as the Apostle expresses it, "wan-

dering stars for whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever;" or whether we are destined to be bright stars shining forever in the empyrean of heaven, reflecting the unfolding glory of the Son of Justice.

Our true life begins when this ceases. We shall die; our bodies will sink into the grave and will be reduced to their original dust; but our souls will defy the dominion of death, and will pass from hence to the judgment seat of God. This world too will pass away; the great seas will dry up and the mountains disappear; all that we see will be as if it had never been. Perhaps new worlds, and new universes will take its place, and the new order of things begin on high. The human soul will alone survive the dissolution and destruction of all things else, will alone escape unscathed from the war of jarring worlds and the chaos and confusion of the universe hastening to its doom. Ages will roll away; eternities of eternities will revolve around the throne of God; yet the soul of the just shall abide, young with its immortal vigor, and happy in the embrace of its God. This is your destiny. This is your hope. This is the immortality for which we all have been made, and to which we must unceasingly aspire.

Is it not wisdom then — is it not the highest wisdom, to live for the salvation of this immortal soul? It is sad to think that the soul, which of all things is the most precious, is accounted the cheapest of all things, receives the least share of men's attention. Oh, let us not barter an eternal happiness for a fleeting pleasure! Let us strive by a good life to obtain a blissful

immortality. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit also shall reap life everlasting." Amen.

SERMON XIV

SCANDAL

“It must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.”—MATT. 18, 7.

By scandal is meant in Scripture whatever may cause our neighbor to fall in the way of virtue by offending God. It is a frightful sentence of Our Saviour when He pronounced the commission of this sin so easy, and yet its judgments so severe. “It must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom scandal cometh.” How strong, then, must be the impression of scandal! The greatest good we can do to our neighbor is to contribute to his salvation, and there is no more efficacious means of aiding his soul than good example. “Woe then to him who instead of edifying his brethren is a stumbling block to them!” A sin then, which is denounced in such strong terms of reprobation by our Lord must have a peculiar malignity about it: and, therefore, the opposite virtue must have a peculiar grace and influence. It is an unquestioned fact that good or bad example exercises an almost unlimited sway over the minds of men. It exercises its influence over the educated and uneducated alike. It is a matter of daily experience in the higher and lower circles of society. And this is a most

important matter; for it clearly shows that each one of us has it in his power to benefit, or to harm his neighbor, to be the occasion of the salvation or the ruin of souls. It teaches us that each one can become a powerful champion or a dangerous enemy of his Church. He may assist her in the glorious work of saving souls, and he may render her efforts useless. If the bright light of his example shines before men they will see her good works; but if he lead a scandalous life, he will confirm men in their prejudice against the Church, and paralyze her efforts for the salvation of souls. His brother will live and die in unbelief and that bad Catholic is responsible before God for the loss of that immortal soul.

The nature and malice of sin, we have seen, consists in the violation of God's laws, because they are God's laws. We are responsible to God for every thought, word and deed, and we are also responsible for the influence that our every act and word may have on our fellow men. In order that we may be ministers unto salvation and not to death to our fellow men, I shall endeavor to show you this evening some of the effects which example produces.

1. There is nothing more certain than the fact that the world is very wicked. The fell spirit of atheism is rampant. It pervades the science and literature of the day, and intrudes itself into politics and business, and even enters the ordinary affairs of daily life. It would seem that men have grown tired of God's revelation, and agreed among themselves to banish religion out of the world. They are not willing to give it shelter even

within the hallowed precincts of the Church. The very men who at present rule the world and are expected to give tone to society practice religion only so far as it subserves their own sordid interests. In theory and practice, the fundamental principles of morality are denied. The Ten Commandments of the eternal God are set aside, as men would throw off worn out garments. They have done their duty and are now out of fashion. Sordid self-interest, and a regard of what the world will say, form the new code of morals by which men regulate their conduct. Charity and chasity and humility, as inculcated by Christ, are all but unknown virtues, and at no period of the world's history, I venture to say, was man more completely of the "earth earthy" than in this age of boasted enlightenment and social progress.

But God has written His law upon the conscience of man, and however deplorably man may degenerate he will never erase from his mind the knowledge of good and evil, nor will he pluck out of his heart his natural respect for virtue and aversion to vice. His conduct may be at variance with the principles of morality, but in his heart, in his inmost soul, he will never call evil good or good evil. Neither will he say that vice does honor to a man, nor that virtue degrades him. He is convinced that the very contrary of all this is true. Society may, therefore, degenerate, men may throw off all moral restraint, and corruption may become frightfully prevalent, yet virtue will not cease to command respect. The just man may be persecuted by the wicked and the envious, his very virtue held up

to scorn, but this is the compliment that vice pays to virtue. And yet, in their sober moments, when the intoxication caused by unbridled passion is over, they will enter into themselves and acknowledge that the man whom they held up to scorn and ridicule is, after all, a better man than they are.

2. When men see, therefore, that the priest is the first to respect the sanctity of his calling; that the politician and office holder study not their own personal aggrandizement or sordid interests, but their country's welfare; that the lawyer does not prey like a vulture on the substance of his client, and undertakes not the defense of an unjust cause; that the magistrate sells not justice to the highest bidder; when they see that merchants are scrupulously exact in their business transactions, and that the rich man is not an extortioner of the poor, but loves to be their friend and protector; that the employer pays honest wages for the work performed, and that the laborer is conscientious in the discharge of his duties; when they see that the young man is industrious and avoids the places of dissipation and company in which no respect is paid to virtue; that the look and the dress, and the spirit, and the whole deportment of the young woman betray modest reserve and a delicate sense of honor; when they see, in fine, that the husband is faithful to his wife, and the wife to the husband, and that parents train their children to habits of virtue, and that they in turn take pride in doing honor to their parents; when men see all this, I say, they will respect the conduct of such men and women and regard them as model men and women.

And if with all this they see that these persons, though they make no parade of their religion, are yet deeply religious, and show on every occasion a profound respect for their religion; if they see that they frequent the Church, assist at Mass, listen reverently to the word of God, devoutly receive the sacraments, observe the fasts, in a word, scrupulously comply with all the observances of their religion; when they see that though they boast not of their faith, they are neither afraid nor ashamed to confess it, almost without being aware of it, men transfer the respect they have for these persons to the religion which they profess. To act out our religion in our daily life is our solemn duty, for we must let the light of our good example shine before all men.

3. We know that it is the province of religion to raise men in the scale of moral excellence and to train them to habits of solid virtue. When men see, therefore, that our people are penetrated with a deep sense of religion; that the sharpest scrutiny sees in them nothing worthy of blame, but everything that commands respect and admiration, they naturally conclude that it is religion which has made them what they are, and then they will say that a religion which can form such men and women is a necessity to man's moral wants; that it is a friend and benefactor to the human race; that they who despise its teachings and seek its destruction are enemies of our race, since they undermine the whole moral order, and the very foundation on which our prosperity is based. Thus, by our irreproachable conduct, men are led to respect our holy

religion, to admire and love it, and often seek shelter within her sanctuary from the desolating skeptic and brute materialist of our age.

And now, my brethren, if we are to coöperate in this grand work of saving souls, how are we to do it? Simply by letting the bright light of our example shine before men that they may glorify our Father in Heaven.

Good example is more powerful than mere learned words; it makes an impression where words would be thrown away, and speaks to those whom our words could never reach. Men must see us whether we will or not. If our conduct is correct in every detail they will notice it, and respect us for it; if on the contrary, it is scandalous, they will be shocked and treat us with the contempt which we so richly deserve. In either case our religion will gain or suffer. Men usually judge the tree by its fruits, and the impression exists that religion is intimately connected with moral conduct; religion is the tree which bears the fruit of our works.

4. In the whole history of religion there is, perhaps, no fact more surprising than the rapid conversion of the world to Christianity. When we consider the gigantic, and humanly speaking, insurmountable obstacles which the Christian faith had to encounter when first preached; when we reflect on the strong and apparently well grounded attachment which the Jews had to the religion of their forefathers, and the aversion which they naturally must have had to a religion whose Founder they had nailed to the Cross; when we consider the almost irresistible charms which paganism pos-

sessed in its teachings; so satisfactory to degraded reason in its morality; so perfectly in harmony with the corrupt instincts of the human heart; in its worship so alluring to the senses, and with all the magnificence with which power and wealth and genius and art had embellished it; then, on the other hand, when we consider that most repulsive character of the Christian religion; its doctrines so mysterious; its morality so unmercifully severe; its novelty and the low extraction of its first teachers, the poverty of its disciples; when we consider that during centuries of pagan superstition the worst passions of the human heart had exercised unlimited sway over the minds of men, and how at the first announcement of Christianity the whole colossal power of the Roman empire was employed to extirpate the very name of Christian from the face of the earth; when we look at the funeral piles erected in every corner of the empire, the wild beasts from Germany's forests or Africa's deserts brought to the amphitheatre, the torrents of blood that flowed and crimsoned the earth for nearly three hundred years, we are struck with amazement on beholding the Church issuing forth from the Catacombs, ascending the throne of the Cæsars and ruling over nations that formed the great Roman Empire, and provinces that during seven hundred years even Roman valor could not subdue.

5. And what, my friends, was the cause of this wonderful growth of the Church? Why, coming forth from the midst of darkness and gloom, like the rising sun, has she so quickly attained the glory of meridian splendor? Was it the teaching of her doctors, the elo-

quence of her preachers, or the miracles wrought? There is to-day as much learning and eloquence in the Church as there was then, the power of working miracles exists now as it did then; there are at present living miracles in the Church. Why, then, are conversions so rare in our day? What could be the secret of her success in those early times? It was the patient zeal, the self-sacrificing charity of her priests; it was the heroic constancy of her martyrs; it was the purity of her virgins. It was, in short, the extraordinary sanctity of her children. This was the powerful weapon with which she attacked Judaism, and paganism, the superstitions and vices of that voluptuous age, and with this weapon she achieved her most brilliant conquests.

Example! Oh, how much more eloquent than mere words? When the children of the Church were animated with her spirit she was happy; then she made amazing progress, notwithstanding the most powerful and violent opposition against her. But when her children became degenerate, then days of grief came upon her and she sustained terrible losses. Her worst enemies have been her own degenerate children. Every heresy that has arisen owes its existence to a bad child of the Church, and from the ranks of bad Catholics every heresy receives its strength. It is not the dungeon or exile or loss of property that the Church fears. She fears not the rack, the fire, or sword or persecution in its bitterest form. No! This is her glory! It is then that she appears to the greatest advantage; then that she draws upon herself the world's attention and

excites the admiration of man, and what, humanly speaking, should have been her loss proves to be her gain.

But when her own children lose sight of the sanctity of their vocation and degenerate, then the Church grows weak; then her influence over individuals and over society becomes less powerful; her efforts for the salvation of souls are paralyzed; men either notice her not, or if they do, it is only to point at her the finger of scorn and reproach. There is nothing that so powerfully prejudices non-Catholics against the Church as the scandalous conduct of some Catholics. I know, indeed, that the disedifying conduct of some Catholics is no valid argument against the Church, for if Catholics are bad, they are not so because they are Catholics, but because they are false to her teachings.

6. No one knew better than our Lord how admirably suited to man's wants the Christian religion is; no one knew better than He its wondrous power to develop man's character so as to make him the very beau ideal of moral excellence. But Our Saviour Himself plainly foretold that scandals would arise even in the Church. He likens her to a field in which cockle grows up amid the wheat; He tells us that she is like a net in which all kinds of fish, good and bad, are found. And He says that she resembles the ten virgins, five of whom are foolish virgins. But what follows from this? Simply this, that religion does not destroy man's free will; does not annihilate man's natural inclination to evil, that it does not force him to live up to his convictions. It is not fair, therefore, to hold the

Church responsible for the crimes of her children. But we must not forget that men generally do not reason very logically on the facts that come under their observation. The majority of men are at most only superficial thinkers, and the shrewdest logicians will reason correctly on but few subjects. It is certain that men connect the Church with the bad lives of her children. "He is a bad man," they think and say, "and he is a Catholic; yet the Catholic Church thinks herself better than other churches."

We cannot change men's ways of thinking, and it matters little whether a man loses his soul logically or illogically, but it is of great importance to us that we be not the cause or occasion of his ruin. It may be very true that men cannot plead a valid excuse for their unbelief; it may be true that they lose their souls through their own fault; but if through our disedifying conduct we have confirmed them in their prejudices against the Church, and thus prevented them from examining her claims, how terrible will not our responsibility be in the sight of God? It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to answer to Almighty God for a single soul lost through our fault. And, oh, my friends, how do our accounts stand regarding this matter?

If then, my friends, we love the Church of which through the great mercy of God we have the happiness to be members; if we love the precious souls for whom Jesus Christ died upon the Cross; if we would not see reprobates rising up against us on the day of judgment accusing us of their eternal ruin; if we would not have

God Himself on that dreadful day demand the blood of those unfortunate souls at our hands, let us strive to live so that we may never be a stumbling block to any one. Let our lives be conformable to the teachings of the Church. Let the bright light of our example shine before men, that, seeing our works they may recognize in us children of our Father in Heaven. Scandals there must needs be, but let each one take heed unto himself lest it be through him that scandal cometh. For our Lord has said: "It were better for a man, had he never been born; better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he should be buried in the depths of the sea, than that he should live to be the cause of another's ruin." Amen.

SERMON XV

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!”—HEB. 9, 12.

The holy season of Lent is drawing to a close; and the Church now concentrates her efforts towards one great argument, in order to gain the end which she has in view in these days of salvation. The two weeks between now and Easter are set apart especially for the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ; and this solemn season is called in the language of the Church, Passion-tide. Therefore, the Church assumes the most sombre apparel, and speaks in the saddest tone. The recital of the history of the Passion, the following of our blessed Lord step by step in His career of woe, she reserves for the last three days of this holy time. We celebrated last Friday the feast of the most Precious Blood; and in the Epistle of to-day the noble words of St. Paul are read, in order to bring forward the sufferings of Our Saviour. However, in this, the earlier part of Passion-tide, the aim of the Church is rather to suggest some thoughts which lead the way to Calvary, and to prepare our minds for the great events which happened there. I purpose, therefore,

this evening to consider with you the sufferings of Christ as the measure of sin. In doing this we will follow the beaten lines of our ablest and holiest writers on this sad and painful subject.

1. To understand the evil of sin we must study the lessons of the Cross. Men fail to understand the malice of sin because they have never understood the Cross of Christ. Though the law of God is written on the heart of every man, his perception of sin is more or less confused and indistinct. Christ on the Cross prayed for His executioners: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." He did not mean that they were ignorant of their wrong-doing, but that they did not realize the full atrocity of the deed. And the same may be said of many an unfortunate sinner. A man knows he is doing a dangerous thing, but he does not realize the full danger. He does not take in the full scope of his action, nor its complete consequences. St. Paul speaks of the deceitfulness of sin and aptly describes the disappointment and unhappiness which never fails to overtake the transgressor. "Sin begins pleasantly, but in the end will bite like a snake and will spread abroad poison like a serpent."

2. You will find in almost every village and city people who are proud to be vile, and whose very breath is as a blast from Hell to blight the innocent. They have contracted habits of vice which have changed their natures, until only that which disgusts a pure mind pleases theirs. And yet these creatures were once good and innocent themselves, but were blind to the awful consequences of the evil habits they were contracting

when enticed to sin. Think you that young people who contract habits of sin which undermine their health know the terrible consequences — the weakness of the body, the feebleness of the mind, the early decay, the shame, the remorse, the impotency of the will, the tyranny of passion, and the premature disease and death? No, all this was not in their thoughts at first. These are the bitter lessons the youth has learned in sin. He has not found out what he was doing until it was all but too late. Or that married woman who has fallen in the way of virtue, did she realize what she was doing? Did she think of the plighted faith broken; did she think of the horrible guilt of the adultress, of the agony, the remorse, the deceit, the falsehood, the fear of her whole future life; did she realize the moment when her guilt would be detected, the fury of her wronged husband, her family dishonored, her children torn from her embrace, her name infamous, herself forlorn and ruined? No! these things she did not realize. There was, indeed, on the day of her first dreadful crime, a dark and fearful form in her path that raised its hand in warning, and frowned a frown of dread menace. It was the awful form of Conscience outraged, but she turned away from this sight, and refused to hearken to the voice and heard not half the message. And so the dreadful consequences of her sin have come upon her almost as if there had been no warning. Or take the man addicted to drink. There was a time when he was a handsome young man, with a bright eye and a light step, well dressed and succeeding in business. When he first began to

drink, and "to treat and be treated," did he realize that he would soon be a diseased, bloated, dirty vagabond; his children half naked, and his wife half starved; or that he would spend the last cent in his pocket in the vain effort to allay that thirst for drink which is almost as unquenchable as the very flames of Hell? No; he little foresaw it, and if it had been pointed out to him, he would not have believed it. So it is with all classes. Wherever we look we see that men imagine that sin is a less evil than it really is. It is so easy to commit it, it is so soon done, the temptation so strong, that it does not seem as if such very bad consequences would come of it. So it is done and the bitter consequences follow. It seems as if the lie of Satan to Eve: "Thou shalt not die," still echoes through the world and bewitches men's ears so that they always under-rate the guilt and punishment of sin.

3. But this estimate of sin, so prevalent in the world, is false; it accords not with God's estimate of sin, and that is the only true standard. God is truth. He sees things as they are, and everything is just what He considers it. He is our Judge, and it will not save us when we stand before His bar on trial to tell Him that we have rejected His standard and taken our own. What, then, is God's estimate of sin? Look at the Cross and you have the answer. Let us then go back in spirit, for a moment, to the time and scene of the Crucifixion. It is the feast of the Passover. On this day the Jews were required, each family by itself, to kill a lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. "They were required to eat it standing, with

loins girded, and with staves in their hands, because this feast was in memory of the sudden deliverance of their fathers from the bondage of Egypt . . . when God smote the firstborn of the Egyptians with death . . . and conducted the Israelites miraculously through the waters of the Dead Sea." It was a great feast among the Jews, and always attracted a great multitude of strangers in the holy city. But on this occasion a new excitement was added to the interest of the Holy City, for there was a public execution on Mount Calvary and large crowds hastened to the spot. "The day is dark but as you draw near the Mount, you see, high in the air, the bodies of men crucified; and sitting on the ground, or standing in groups, talking and disputing among themselves, or watching in silence with folded arms, are gathered a vast multitude of spectators."

What is there in this execution to thus gather together all classes of people? The punishment of crucifixion was inflicted only on slaves and public malefactors. What is it, then, that gives such interest to this scene? It is He Who hangs upon the Cross at Whose feet three weeping women kneel. Read the title on the Cross and learn who He is. "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." Yes, this is Jesus, the merciful, and kind; He Who went about doing good, healing all manner of sickness; He Who spoke words of truth and love. This is Jesus the King of the Jews, Whom a thousand prophecies fulfilled in Him, and thousand miracles performed by Him, pointed out as the promised Messiah. Jesus Whom the Eternal

Father, by a voice from Heaven, had proclaimed His own Son: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

4. Why is this? Why this amazing fact of a God, suffering and dying? Alas, it is an old story; one which we have often heard, but which cannot be repeated too often. Adam had sinned and fallen. In him we all sinned and fell. In him we stood. He was the moral head of the human race. His fate was its fate; his destiny was its destiny. He fell from the supernatural order and forfeited his supernatural destiny. He could not transmit his supernatural inheritance to his children any more than a sovereign justly bereft of his kingdom can transmit it to his offspring.

This fall was in itself irreparable. Adam's sin was in itself irremediable; for there was an essential and invincible malice in it. It was not the mere eating of the forbidden fruit, but the violation of the divine law which forbade it. It was the effort of the creature to rid itself of the duty of obedience and submission which it owes to its Creator. It was the rebellion against the Creator of the creature endowed with free will, the first exercise of its sovereign faculty. There was an infinite malignity in it, because aimed against an infinite God. Hence it was inexpiable. Man could offend, but could not appease God. The pagan sacrifices of expiation and mediation betrayed the consciousness of the original fall of our race and of their own insufficiency to propitiate God. The Jewish sacrifices bespoke the same consciousness of guilt; and confessed

this same insufficiency in looking forward to the One Great Sacrifice which they prefigured. In vain did men seek to propitiate Heaven by the blood of sheep, oxen and goats. If an atonement was to be made, if a ransom was to be offered, that atonement should be of infinite efficacy, that ransom should be of priceless value. Nothing short of an infinite sacrifice could suffice, a God-man should be that atonement; God, that the atonement might be infinite, and thus equal the malice of sin; man, that this atonement might be reputed the satisfaction of the race that had offended.

5. God then should suffer and die or man be irretrievably and hopelessly lost. Christ offered Himself as a necessary atonement, the all sufficient Sacrifice. In the sufferings of Christ, every sin of every kind received its special reparation. His mouth is filled with vinegar and gall to atone for our luxury. His ear is filled with revilings to expiate the greediness with which we have drunk in poisonous flattery and vile slander. His eyes languish because ours have been lofty, and His hands and feet have been pierced with nails because ours have been the instruments of sin. He suffered death because we deserved it. Nor was it our Lord's body alone that suffered. It would be a great mistake to suppose that His sacrifice was merely external. The chief part of man is his soul. St. Leo says that our Lord on the Cross appeared as a penitent. It was not only that He suffered for the sins of men, but it was as if He had committed them. The horror of them filled His soul; sorrow for the outrage which they had done to the Majesty and Holiness of God consumed Him.

"My soul is sad even unto death," He said. He was not killed; His enemies did not take His life. The flood of sorrow for sin came into His soul, and overwhelmed Him. It was too much, and His Sacred Heart was broken. Who could measure the weight of that sorrow? He bowed His head and yielded up His life, and then sin was expiated. Then the work of man's atonement was completed, and man had done adequate penance, and His sorrow for sin had reached its just proportion as an offence against God.

Here we have a revelation of the evil of sin, and we begin to feel the malice that calls for such an atonement. What are we to think of the nature of sin that crucified the eternal God, and put Him to open shame, made of Him a very worm of the earth, and an outcast among men? What are we to think of the deep-dyed guilt, black malice, foul enormity of sin which was satisfied with nothing less than the shedding of the Blood of the Incarnate God? How are we to imagine the bitter malignity, the intense evil of sin, which stops at nothing short, I had almost said, of the annihilation of the God-head. Yes, my Christian friends, it is in meditating upon the suffering and dying Christ, as the divinely appointed expiation for sin, that we can best understand its true nature, its deadly malice, the hatred that God bears it, and the ruin which it brings upon the soul. Since, therefore, Christ died for sin, the Cross of Christ is the true measure of sin. St. Bernard says: "From the consideration of the remedy, learn the greatness of thy danger. Thou wast in error, and behold the Son of the Virgin is sent, the Son of the Most

High God is ordered to be slain, that thy wounds may be healed by the precious balsam of His Blood. See, O man, how grievous were thy wounds, for which in the order of Divine Wisdom it was necessary that the Lamb Christ should be wounded. If they had not been unto death and unto eternal death, never would the Son of God have died for them. The Cross of Christ is not only an altar of sacrifice, but a pulpit of instruction. From that pulpit, lifted up on high, Jesus Christ preaches a lesson to the world." The burden of this lesson is the evil of sin. He cries to a guilty people, to a people who have broken the law, and says to them: "See what you have done. See My thorn-crowned head and My pierced hands and feet. Is it a light thing that could have bound Me to this Cross? Me, the Creator of all things, to Whom you owe life and liberty? Who by My word and touch have so often healed the sick and released them that were bound by Satan. Not the Jews have nailed Me to the Cross, but My love and thy sins. Yes, behold in My sufferings your sin displayed. See in the penalty that I pay the punishment which you have deserved. See your guilt in My sorrow. Look at Me and see what sin is in the presence of the all-holy God."

6. Can anything show more than this what a mysterious evil sin is, that it is an offence against God, an assault upon His throne, an attack upon His life, an evil all but infinite? All the other expressions of the evil of sin, the cries of misery which it has wrung from its victims, the warnings which natural reason has uttered against it, the tender lamentations with which

the saints have bewailed it, all pale before the announcement that God sent His Son into the world to die for it. The Cross, then, is the root of that uncompromising and awful doctrine about sin — the doctrine, that sin is in no case whatsoever to be allowed, that even the smallest sin for the greatest results can never be permitted; that it is an evil far greater than can be spoken or imagined; that it must never be trifled with, or made light of; that it is to be shunned with the greatest horror, and avoided, if need be, even at the cost of life — which has always been so essential a part of Christianity.

And now, it is because men forget the Cross, because their minds no longer move on a Christian basis, that they make light of sin. May, then, the great lesson of the Cross, the measure of sin, be fruitful in our souls. May it reap more than a transient emotion; may its effect be abundant and abiding, showing itself in changed thoughts, and a renewed life. May this lesson of the Cross be ever with us to fill our souls, and direct our actions that we may so live this life as to be made partakers of the next. May we now die to our sins and rise to a new life which purity, innocence, charity, justice, temperance and every Christian virtue may illustrate. Amen.

SERMON XVI

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."—MATTH. 21, 9.

These words are the record of the enthusiasm of the people on seeing the Son of God enter into the Holy City. They are the record also of that mutability of human affection, by which the same voices that then cried out: "Hosanna," a few days afterward, under change of circumstances, cried out: "Let him be crucified." But these words are especially applicable to the solemnity of Palm Sunday. The Palm is significant of triumph, as well as of joy. The branch of palm and the vial of blood engraved on the tombs of the Catacombs, distinguish the martyrs above all others and symbolize victory. And yet it may seem strange for me to speak this evening about victory, since there is no necessity to speak of the victory of the Son of God, because He has triumphed over death and the grave. But it has its application to the Church which inherits the vicissitudes of His life. The Church is heir to His sufferings, and at the same time to His triumphs. I purpose, therefore, to speak to you this evening on the Triumphs of the Cross of Christ.

I. The Cross was not an accident in the life of

Jesus Christ. The Cross was not an afterthought; its shadow came up from eternity, and was first visible to men in the Manger at Bethlehem. The Cross means love, and love means sacrifice. The Sacred Scriptures plainly declare that the Cross stands in direct relation to sin. And sin necessitated a condition which love alone could meet.

God's hatred of sin is best seen, not in His frowns, but in His tears. We best know the intensity of human anger when it settles into deep human sorrow. It could not have been a trifle which started the great drops of blood from the body of Jesus in Gethsemane, or that caused Him such exceeding sorrow on the Cross. There is, then, something terrible about this moral putrescence which is called sin. It was not a speck on the surface: it was poison in the blood. The tones heard on Calvary are not the harsh tones of vengeance; there is a wail of sorrow, deep, loud and long as if the very heart of God had broken. It is the agony of love; it was dying innocence struggling with dread guilt. The Cross, then, is the symbol of God's love for man, and the emblem of the Church of Jesus Christ. Can we wonder, then, that the shadow of the Cross falls upon the myriad altars of the Church? Can we wonder that it was under that sacred standard that she has marched to all her victories, victories which make her history the wondrous record that it is? Can we wonder that in her darkest hour of peril, when her power was assailed by external enemies, and when her heart was bleeding because of the treachery of recreant children, the Cross has sweetened the waters

of bitterness, and given priceless value to the tears of her affection? It is the noblest instinct of the human heart to cling to everything that can bring back the memory of the past. When the light has left the eyes of the dead friend, everything he used to look upon possesses the power to unseal the fount of our tears. When the warm hand has grown motionless and cold in death, everything it touched has a peculiar sacredness about it. And so, following the irresistible promptings of nature that is in them, the world's mourners treasure up the relics of the buried past. And hence it is not wonderful that under the operation and in the sphere of grace, we should find developed in their noblest forms, the instincts of the human heart. The Cross, therefore, the altar of the Great Sacrifice, can never lose its hold on the affections of a ransomed race; the wood which the wounded body of Our Saviour touched, which was purpled with His Sacred Blood, must remain forever an object of peculiar veneration. Nay more, even to those who, by a special instinct of wickedness, have brought themselves to hate the Cross and scoff at the mysteries which it symbolizes, even to those, it can never become an object of contempt; for they must acknowledge that it has gone forth with wondrous power upon earth. It has moulded human genius and modified human thought; it has gone into the family and into the state, and has left its mark on both, and what was once the disgraceful gibbet of the malefactor, has come to be the symbol of the greatest moral force that has arisen among men.

2. But to us who share in all the sympathies of the household of faith; to us who feel that our eternal destinies are bound up in the story with which the Cross is eloquent; how grateful a thing it is, to go back to that story, and refresh our world-worn hearts with the sweetness of its music. The Cross may be contemplated in three stages — that of struggle, that of triumph, and that of final victory.

In an obscure corner of the world, there had grown up an isolated nation. They claimed for themselves an antiquity that carried the mind back to the time when the history of the leading nations of the earth was wrapped up in the shadows of fable. They had their history carefully preserved, and its pages were crowded with the strangest assertions, and the most miraculous incidents. It could be seen at once that they were a peculiar people, isolated by almost every feature of their national polity from the other families of the human race. And yet they boasted that by some mysterious way the destinies of mankind were bound up with the history of their nation. The prophets had spoken of a Messiah, of One whom God was to send to lead His people. The words of promise had rung on the ears of the Jewish patriarch, and his heart swelled with high hope. But the watch, hopeful though it was, grew weary of the delay. King after king went down from the throne of Juda to the tomb, sad at heart, because he had not lived to see the Messiah. Prophet after prophet sat in his lonely watch-tower, looking through the darkness, watching, waiting, hoping for the faintest glimmer of the dawn.

Each generation went to the tomb with the hope for the generation yet to come: and when the Jewish father blessed his son on his death-bed, his fondest prayer was that his child might live to see the crowning glory of his race in the rising of the "Son of Justice." But time went on; the earthly power had passed from the house of David, his sceptre was broken, and the diadem of Juda's princes was humbled in the dust. A pagan and a stranger ruled in the palaces of Israel, and the Roman soldier tramped with defiant step through the streets of the Holy City, whose every stone was hallowed by memories of the glories of a fallen people. And in this their hour of desolation, there appeared a Man who claimed to unite in Himself the qualities with which the prophets had foretold the Messiah would be gifted. He had gone among the people and confirmed His claim by stupendous miracles. He had made the blind to see and the dumb to speak, and more than once His voice had pierced beyond the barriers of the tomb, had pierced unlistening ears, and quickened hearts whose throbbing death had stopped, and the dead came forth from their graves. But blind, they saw not; deaf, they did not hear; and the people whom He had come to save, fastened Him to a Cross. But His doctrine died not with Him. He had sown the little seed, that was to grow into a mighty tree, under whose branches the world's weary hearts were to find repose.

3. Twelve men, poor in the world's learning, go forth to conquer the world. Surely the success that would come from such a mission must be a success that comes from God. And now commenced that long

struggle between the world and the Cross, that will only end when the Cross is borne by angels, before the victorious Judge of the living and the dead. Jesus, in His last discourse to His disciples, on the eve of His Passion, told them that the world would hate them; that the enmity which was placed by the ordinance of God between the serpent and the woman's seed was about to become manifest, in the conflict which should go on forever between His followers and the myriad followers of the Prince of Darkness.

Men, then, began to feel that there was abroad a mysterious influence which they could not understand. The new doctrines, strong with the might of truth, and attractive by their intrinsic beauty, won upon the hearts of men. The new religion made its proselytes in the corrupt city that ruled the world; voices from the Catacombs sounded in the chambers of the pagan palaces, and hearts that had been steeped in worldliness, recognized their teaching as divine. They had drained the cup of pleasure to its bitter dregs; they had felt their weary hearts turn with half despair to a vague something that might satisfy its cravings, but hitherto they had found it not. And now there was presented to them a teaching, which in sublimity surpassed the teaching of the wisest, and a morality purer and less earthly than pagan sage had ever dreamed in his hour of austerest wisdom. Here they found the mystery of life explained, and the darkness cleared away that had shrouded the world's destiny. Here they found an object worthy of immortal souls and a means to satisfy the cravings of their weary hearts. But the

new religion made its way not without a struggle. For centuries a cloud of persecution hung over the Church, and her children were baptized in blood. God designed in the early stages of the Cross's progress to show that those who marched beneath that sacred banner could give up their lives for the cause which they upheld.

4. The infant Church had to encounter the dreadful and long sustained and concentrated opposition of iron-hearted Rome — the mistress of the world! Her martyrs were reckoned by thousands and tens of thousands, and her progress was everywhere sealed with the blood of her own children. No less than ten Roman Emperors, wielding the destinies of the world, successively unsheathed the sword of persecution against her, and published edicts for the utter extermination of the Christian name. And to this persecution of bloodshed was added that of the foulest slander. Christians were everywhere represented as foreigners, as secret enemies of the empire, addicted to secret and atrocious orgies, and to banquet on the flesh of infants newly slain; as enemies of the human race, as everything, in a word, that was wicked and hateful.

And yet this is not half of what the Church really suffered during the first three centuries of her existence. But still she triumphed! Christ was with her, as He had solemnly promised to be. The gates of Hell could not prevail against her, because He had promised that they should not prevail. She came forth from this struggle, it is true, with her garments dripping with the blood of her own children who had fallen in battle,

but her face all radiant with joy and her brow decked with the laurels of victory! And the copious bloodshedding of the martyred followers of the Cross was not in vain. It produced fruit a thousandfold; and now the bright vision of her own Constantine the Great was fully realized. The motto inscribed upon that heavenly Cross, which had appeared to him at midday while on his march against the tyrant Maxtentius, "In this sign shalt thou conquer," became now her watchword as well as the auspicious omen of her future victories. She had conquered, because Christ had foretold that she should conquer.

5. And now the Church entered on her period of victory and triumph. The proud princes of Rome wept tears of sorrow at the tomb of those whom their predecessors had slain, and the diadem of the world's master lay humbled in the dust of buried saints. Freed from the lengthened persecutions of the past, the Church began to perfect her organization. The voices of her Doctors were eloquent in the explanation of her dogmas, and the harmonious teaching of her councils silenced the swelling voices of heresy. The Cross went onward through the world, conquering and to conquer. Kingdom after kingdom was added to the fold of Christ. The Church took up what civilization she found, and left a mark on it which even her deadliest enemies must acknowledge to be ineffaceable. She took the rough barbarians who were laying Europe desolate, and with a strong hand and determined purpose, she moulded them into a Christian people. North and south, east and west, sounded her footsteps, with a

music like the tramp of armies, and a power that could come only from the God of battles. And in her long career she has survived revolutions which have swept away the most mighty states and empires; she has weathered storms in which the stoutest barks have suffered shipwreck; she has come unscathed out of fiery ordeals which have consumed all other institutions which were the mere creation of man, of human wisdom and power. She has seen kingdom after kingdom rise, rule and perish, and yet she grows not old; she has seen histories begun and finished, and yet she has not failed.

Like the sturdy oak shaken by the storm, she has taken deeper root, and has become more firmly established on the soil of the earth by each successive tempest that has swept by her, in the long lapse of ages. Persecution has not only not impaired, but has rather served to extend her empire; even as the wind scatters the seed of the plant and now sows it broadcast upon the earth. She cannot perish, because God is her light and her strength; Jesus Christ is her Head, and the Holy Ghost is her Teacher and Comforter. She cannot fail, unless the Saviour God fail in His word, and He has said: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

"Strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore,"

she has survived every tempest and withstood every assault. She has fixed her capital among the tombs of her persecutors, and, from the crumbled monuments of the faded glory of the buried Cæsars, the voice of

one old man, seated on the throne of the Fisherman, can speak with mystic power to the hearts and consciences of millions.

6. But there is still another stage in which we may contemplate the Cross. It is the last scene in the busy and ever-changing drama of life. It is in the stage of final victory. The time will come when the world will have fallen on its last days, and the shadow of approaching doom shall fall deep and dark on nature and the human heart. A time, when the system of the thousand worlds that were sown in space by the creative hand of the Almighty, shall have grown their several harvests and shall begin to give token that their purpose is nearing its completion. The time will come when the last man shall die, and there shall be none to bury him; earth shall afford a grave no more. Life shall be swept utterly away, and a silence as deep, but far more awful than that which preceded the creation, shall fall on the dead world. When the angel's trumpet of doom shall send its wailing note through all the silent spaces of the world; when the assembled sons of Adam shall stand, with various feelings, in the Valley of Judgment, then shall there be growing brightness in the east, and borne by angels, the standard of the Cross will herald the approach of Him to Whom it has been given to judge the living and the dead. That will be the hour when the Cross shall be vindicated against the sneers of those who deemed it folly, and the cold neglect of those who treated it with indifference. And when the judgment shall be passed and done, when the blessed promise of eternal joy shall

have thrilled the hearts of those who have fought and conquered, when the sentence of eternal reprobation shall have rung like a knell that will sound forever and ever in the ears of the lost, the victorious Cross will be carried back amid the canticles of the elect and shall gladden their eyes for all eternity in the kingdom which they have won. And, my friends, what shall be our part on that dreadful day? Shall the Cross bring joy to us, or shall it bring despair? It depends upon our conduct here whether we shall look with gladness or with dread on the emblem of our salvation. The bitterest hour that man can know on earth is the hour when his sin has found him out, with the lash in its hands; when the passions he had indulged become a nest of scorpions in his bosom; when the sinner in his remorse becomes loathsome even to himself; when men have found him out, and point the finger of scorn at him, and shudder at the very mention of him, and when he knows that, for all time to be, the very memory of him will be unholy. These are bitter hours to those whom they visit, but what is this to the awakening of conscience, and the gaze of men, that shall take place before the judgment seat of Christ. There are sad awakenings even in this world, but what are they to that of the self-deluded sinner, whose dream of forgetfulness is broken by a summons to Judgment. If we wish to escape this awful awakening, let us enlist in the army of the Cross. In holy Baptism our hearts and brows were signed with the sacred sign of the Cross. May the holy Cross be our guide in life and our consolation in death.

"O Cross, in this Christ's Passion-tide,
Help thou those who in thee confide:
In holy hearts fresh grace implant,
And pardon to the sinner grant.

"To Thee, Eternal Three in One,
Let homage meet by all be done:
As by the Cross Thou dost restore,
So rule and guide us evermore."

Amen.

SERMON XVII

THE NORM OF MORALITY

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”—ROM. 14, 8.

I wish to recall to your minds this evening the fundamental ideas of morality as set forth in Christian ethics. I invite your closest attention to this subject, as it will serve as an introduction to this Lenten series of sermons. The question to be considered this evening is the basis of morality. If asked what is the rule of right conduct, the answer is the will of Almighty God. The supremacy of God over us, our individual accountability to His tribunal, are the great truths which influence us to do good and avoid evil. The fatal misfortune of the many is that they lose sight of these vital principles. Hence sin prevails.

1. God is our Creator: “Know ye that the Lord is God. He made us and not we ourselves.” We absolutely depend upon Him, receiving from Him life, thought and action. We belong entirely to Him. He disposes of us as He wills, and in justice we have naught to say, but to obey. Will the clay say to the potter: “Why hast thou made me thus?” Will man say to the omnipotent God, why hast Thou made me

thus, or why hast Thou bound me by these laws? Forming our beings according to the eternal prototype of His eternal essence, He marks out the laws under which we exist, and those remain for us the condition of our existence. To strive for liberation from those laws is to strive for liberation from His power and authority, to call Him down from His throne of Master and Monarch, to deny His wisdom, and to make of ourselves gods in His universe. The whole universe received the impress of law, when, at the bidding of His word, it sprang into beauteous and harmonious form. Its unthinking parts, the fiery suns in limitless yonder space, the fields and the forests of the earth's surface, ocean's billows, and the vibrations of the atmosphere, never depart from the commands which they received from their Creator. One being among all others rises to sublime grandeur by the possession of intelligence and free will. It is man. Inasmuch as He communicates with matter he is subject to physical laws, which under the penalty of physical death, he is constrained to obey. To rebel against them is certain death. Will it be that, in the higher ranges of action in which the soul operates, he is left by the Creator of all things *without rule or command*, an erring, aimless star in the heavens of supreme harmony? And if rules and commands are imposed upon him whilst he remains physically free to rebel, will it be that he is without *moral obligations* to obey in absolute loyalty? — Man in his creation received laws from His Creator, else the Creator were a wisdomless builder and men were the *only element of chaos* in a

well ordered world.—Laws received, man in the exercise of his free will, must freely follow them. To dare send up his voice in protesting tones, saying, I will not serve, were an evil, a wrong-doing, immensely more heinous than the sudden stopping of the planets in their perennial revolutions, or their leaping away from their prescribed orbits, and the consequent breaking up of the firmament into disorder and darkness.

2. What then is the supreme rule of human morals? *It is the Divine Will of God.*—The idea of right has its first home in the Divine Mind, and it resides in created minds in so far as these reflect or mirror the mind of God. All other concepts of right which may be proposed to us are false, and indeed every enunciation of them presupposes an atheistic world, a world void of faith in God. *The human race* in the deepest depths of nature is ethical, is moral. It feels its moral obligations as it feels its life. It revolts at the suggestion that it may be lawless in conduct, that passion and whim may govern its doings.

But for moral obligations, there must be a principle, a rule *independent* of each individual will, and capable of imposing itself on *all*. God being removed by materialistic and agnostic doctrines, this principle is sought for in all directions but nowhere is it found. *The moral* order, therefore, imperiously demands God, uniting with all else in creation to prove His being, His power and wisdom.—Without God as supreme, eternal Lawmaker, morals in men would be as changeable as the standards which the various evolutions of civilizations would *erect*, and as void of authority as the

doubtful guessings of human philosophies. Reduced to their final expression, systems of morals which put God aside come down to undiluted egotism, and egotism in the masses of humanity will manifest itself much oftener in ignoble passion than in the exalted virtues and sacrifices of self which alone make human life valuable and beautiful.— With God reigning above us, moral principles endure: and a people will be moral just in so far as they *know, love, and serve* Almighty God.—

3. I have said that the *Divine Will is the supreme rule*, the eternal law of human morals. But we must not here imagine that there is ought of caprice or arbitrariness in this will. God is eternal reason, and all His works bespeak reason and show forth the order which proceeds from reason.— The laws which God imposes upon man are those which man's nature demands that it may fulfill its appointed destiny and live out its God received life. The laws of the sun and the moon are conditions making it possible for them to exist, and to effect in the universe the work which the general harmony of material beings exacts of them. In like manner, man receives his laws, parts and complements of his very nature. Obeying the Divine Law, man serves himself, and exalts himself. Submission to God is the condition of healthfulness of soul and body, of the perfection of man in his several social relations, of his beatitude along the whole course of his existence.— Here and there, this submission seemingly works sufferings, as rebellion seemingly procures happiness; but momentary results are not to be considered in them—

selves, but in the general trend of action, and right doing ends always in peace and bliss, and wrong doing ends always in perdition and misery.

4. But what is the *Divine Law*? The Divine Law is named at times the natural, at times the positive law. The natural law is that which necessarily follows from the very constitution of the human being, and from its appointed destiny. The human reason itself reads it in the tracings of the human beings. Hence its universality among all men, of all nations and of all times. *But* because the human reason discovers it, the inference is false which would give it as the *product of the human mind*. *As such* it would be a mere tendency of our being, a mere concept or ideal of the mind, but no law. The natural law shows itself to our reason as an *element in the general ordering of the universe, by God's* infinite wisdom, and in consequence, comes to us invested with His authority; indeed *His own voice*, and *His own will*. Such is the natural law, such its force and authority.

5. What, then, is the positive law of God? The positive law of God is the declaration of God's will in our regard made through special revelations. This may be a law not absolutely required as a condition of our *natural being*; but yet it is always in harmony with this being and of a kind to elevate it, and aid it in the fulfillment of the natural law. Obedience to positive law is a *precept of natural law*, which demands of us as creatures that we harken to the words of the Creator whenever and wherever spoken.

Man's *soul* receives the knowledge of divine law,

whether through *reason alone*, or through *reason illumined* by revelation, and makes solemn *proclamation of it*. This *proclaiming power is conscience*, the most sacred and mysterious operation of man's being.—It is the *echoing* of God's own voice, conveying to each one the message of the Most High, and with the precept itself the awful *sanction* for time and eternity in which it is wrapt,—God leaves no man in absolute moral darkness; *for moral darkness is the effacement of human dignity*. *No one exists without a conscience—an apprehension* of things right to be done, and things wrong to be shunned, and a penetrating sense of duty and of obligations to do the right and shun wrong.—Conscience is the highest prerogative of man; it is intelligence, intelligence reaching unto God, as supreme truth and supreme goodness. It is the absolute, indelible border-line separating men from all inferior beings in creation, beyond which opens a world lit up by the light from God's own throne, into which enter only they who are made to God's own image and likeness. Conscience speaks to man in authoritative tones; because it speaks in God's name and with God's authority.

6. This then is the *evil* in wrong doing, that it *offends God*, and is rebellion against Him as Creator and Governor of the universe, and it is *this* that men fail so often to understand. The evil is not in the violation of human laws, as such, criminality as the word is taken. Human laws are indirectly from God and are to be obeyed, always supposing that they do not contravene, trench on, or wound a higher law. But the con-

tempt of mere human authority and the incurring of human penalties is a matter of small and temporary moment. The evil is not in the injury done to fellow-men; on their own account they have slight claims on my services. Nor is the injury done to self; injury comes to self from *moral evil*, but as a *consequence* of evil, not as evil itself. *The evil is sin*, which is a direct violation of God's laws, a direct rebellion against God. In the moral order, but two beings are to be considered in the last analysis — God and I. What the multitude of my fellows think and say matters me not. The awful question is, what does God think of me? Nor does His vision stop at exterior actions of mine: it penetrates to the most hidden thought of my mind, the most secret vibrations of my heart's fibres. From Him there is no concealment. His eyes are upon the ways of men, and He considereth all their steps. There is no darkness and there is no shadow of death where they may be hidden who work iniquity.— The rights of God are supreme. If justice is refused to Him there can be no meaning in the justice we would accord to others: — Our ingratitude is the blackest, since from Him come all good things to us, even life itself. If hardened toward Him, why should hearts open towards others? — The malice of sin is beyond power of measurement; for it reaches unto the *Infinite One* and robs Him of His inalienable rights. Sin is the destruction of all order and of all virtue. God Himself in His Omnipotence could not authorize or look upon it with placid eyes. In doing so He would be guilty Himself of violating order in His universe, in His creation. He

could have refrained from creating me, but having created me, He cannot but exact from me most faithful obedience.

7. I am accountable to God for all moral doing, for thoughts, words and acts. As lawmaker He must have put a sanction to His laws. I must at some time come before His tribunal and report my stewardship. Others pass judgment upon me as they may; their words are mere breathings of the air which soon are lost upon the winds, which sooner or later I escape from, through the silence of the grave, across which the murmurings of human voices do not reach. *But God is eternal; God remains* and confronts me in time and eternity. O God, how little we think of Thee, of Thy rights, of Thy judgments! The forgetfulness of God is the beginning of our woes, and *this forgetfulness* has settled upon the earth like a deadly pall. We talk of every one but of God, we think of every one but of Him. We must have news from all quarters of the earth; none is asked for from Heaven. We insist on rights being accorded to ourselves; we accord rights to others; the rights of God do not seem to concern us. God is away from us; no wonder the earth weeps with sin and crime.—The true man is the man of God, who lives in God's presence, and obeys His laws *because they are God's laws*.

Strong is the soul that lives with and for God. There is naught on earth so beautiful, so noble. A sense of duty rules all its conduct, and gives it the power of heroism. Nothing moves it from the path of rectitude. Fierce passions roll against it their im-

potent billows. Worldly interests, temptations of *power* and *pelf* have no voice in its counselings. To all *seductions of riches and pleasures*, to menaces of persecution and death it answers: I will not, I cannot. The soul, heroic in duty, may be that of a child or weak woman; it transcends a thousandfold the powerful conqueror levelling the walls of strong cities, but weak before personal temptation.

It may be the soul of uncultured peasant, or an obscure beggar; it is *immensely* greater than the soul of vaunted philosopher or envied Cræsus, over whom sin is master. The Infinite is the judge of true value, and to the saintly *disciple of duty*, the Infinite bows in love divine; and *He despises the haughty* and the honored, who know Him not and love Him not. Would we be disciples of duty, let us *cling close to God*. When perils affront us, from whatever side, let us instantly enter into the sanctuary of *conscience* and there commune with God. There peace and victory await us. In the presence of God we are invincible. The righteous soul defies earth and Hell; it laughs to scorn demons; its own inferior appetites fall back cowed before its stern refusal to yield to them. One power alone can open to the enemy the citadel of the soul, and that is the soul itself, in the abuse of its free will. So long as the soul wills virtue it is as mighty in its resolve as the *Infinite* Who lends to it *His own power*.

Be it our never-ceasing study to strengthen in us conscience; to build up in our souls this overpowering sense of duty, which will make sin impossible to us whatever the temptation, whatever the circumstances.

What is *right*, not what *pleases*, that must we do.
What is right: God's will, be it my ceaseless rule.
God and I: O God, be I ever Thine, and be Thou
ever mine! Amen.

SERMON XVIII

THE SANCTION OF LAW

“God will render to every man according to his works.”—
ROM. 2, 6.

God reigning above us, man dependent upon God, we are by nature His subjects, responsible to Him in our acts, amenable to His judgments. Being a God all-wise and all-provident, a God of supreme order, He necessarily has imposed upon us laws which are, in their ultimate analysis, nothing but the conditions of our own well being, and of the fulfillment of the purposes for which we exist. Physical laws belong to unthinking creation; moral laws to that part of creation which is intelligent and self-determining. Because man is so highly endowed as to be conscious of his obligations, and to be able, if he chooses, to protest and resist, no moral freedom from the law is therefore accorded. The obligation, measured by the dignity and favors received, is the more imperative. Man in the observance of the laws of his Creator obtains the fullness of being, the realization of destiny, and the harmony of being which results in peace and fruition. If he does not obey the laws of God, willfully violates them, he brings upon himself incompleteness of being, unrest, suffering. In other words, to all the laws of

God there is a sanction, i.e., punishment for violating them.

The sanction to physical laws is plain to all eyes. The planets of the firmament escaping from their prescribed orbits or normal course, encounter one another, and break to pieces. The tree, the flower, with misdirecting roots, miscarrying sap, wither and decay. The human body, if regardless of the laws governing health, dies. What of man within the wide range of moral obligations, of moral accountability? Dire disaster must follow rebellion and wrong-doing.

Man, by his reason and free will, so nearly approaches the *divine* life, and mirrors the *divine perfections*, that he is of immensely greater importance in the mind of the Creator than all irrational creation. A higher destiny has been allotted to him. Other beings play their parts in time; man in his soul is *immortal*, as reason itself teaches, and revelation makes *absolutely* sure. Laws proportioned to his elevation have been read out to him, and, we assume at once, *sanctions* correspondingly weighty, affixed to these laws.

The moral law is the condition of *complete life* in man. The violation of it, therefore, leaves the subject in a state of *incompleteness*, and this in a conscious being means suffering. The legislator that does not add a sanction to his law abdicates his majesty, and invites upon himself the scorn and contempt of undutiful inferiors. Human lawmakers give sanction to their enactments. Is the *Divine Lawmaker* less wise? less powerful? The absence of a sanction is

the grant of importunity, the inviting to sin. We must consider the nature of our moral obligations. While reason approves them and conscience imperiously demands their observance, the lower, baser elements within us dislike them, and impel us in contrary pathways.

Man is a strange admixture. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul, tells us of the two men in each one of us, the one saying "I will," and the other fiercely shouting, "I will not." Alas, how violent the war between the two; and how often the nobler man sorrowing, the viler one triumphs and bends the immortal soul, God's own image and likeness, down into the mire of beastly passion. A God Himself indifferent to the issue of the struggle, smiling with equal complacency upon virtue and vice, would impliedly approve of vice, and throw into the scales in opposition to right conduct, the whole weight of His authority. God is the God of order, the God Who has traced upon our souls indelible characters, His ethical prescriptions, and, consequently, He is a being Himself supremely ethical, demanding that men do right and shun wrong, blessing and rewarding right doing, and punishing wrong doing.

God is no indifferent observer of this twofold man, the one part conscious of righteousness, tearing amid agony inexpressible its being in twain, to hold the immortal above the reach of passion, to guard the immaculate from the unclean touch of the wild waves of sin — the other burying the soul, for the sake of animal enjoyment, in the depths of shame, and blotting

from his brow the grace and beauty of its divine origin. Let us know that there is a sanction to God's enactments, and a sanction well proportioned to the greatness of the cause at issue and to the fierceness of the battle which it engages.

The misfortune, the evil of the day is the absence of God in our daily life. Irreligion stalks through the land; and where irreligion reigns, the society of men rapidly approaches a society of animals,—and why not, if man is the mere animal, where the strong devour the weak, where might is right, where *passion* is the sole incentive to action. The fatal misfortune is, that we lose sight of the fact that laws have been read out by God — laws — the very condition of our moral life — and have been laid aside as worn out garments. The material world overshadows us. We know how vitally important it is that the sun give light and heat, that the earth revolve, that the seasons come at marked periods. Physical evils menacing our bodies affright us. War and pestilence alarm us,—conditions leading to fever and cholera must at all cost be eliminated. *But* sin moves us not. Pride and impurity and dishonesty awaken slight protest, except so far as they injure our temporal interests. Insults to God, rebellion against His decrees, the contemptuous neglect of His rights, are of no concern to us. The death of soul to His grace is of slightest moment. O men, blinded to truth and justice, know you that the Almighty values an immortal soul above earth and planets; that the violation of an ethical law by a free intelligent agent is an evil far more

heinous in His sight than the blotting out of the whole firmament !

The world is made for man, not man for the world, and man's *soul*, not the *body*, is man. The evil of evils is when a rational being, knowing God and knowing God's laws, profiting by the free will accorded to it, rises in the presence of the Sovereign Master and exclaims: "*I will not serve.*" The evil of evils is when man, God's choicest creature, is degraded, and the Omnipotent is insulted.—When the Son of God came upon earth to heal man, restore harmony, He had in view the *moral sores* of man and the peace between the soul and God. The Incarnation and Redemption were not ransom *too precious* for the purchasing of freedom from sin.

The universal faith of mankind, in all ages and in all forms of religious worship, puts the sanction of the moral law in the *life beyond the grave*. No doubt, in the present life, whether in the actual harm done to one's soul and body by sin, whether in the remorse of conscience which the commission of sin begets, *there is a penalty* for wrong doing, as there is a reward for virtue, in peace of heart and the solacing effects of well regulated conduct. But the violation of the moral law does not bring, as the violation of physical law, swift plenary punishment. In all its features the moral life of man shows itself upon earth rather as in its *dawnings*, rather as in an early stage leading to a higher and more complete form than that which it now offers. The cunning of men to aid in turning off the penalty of sin in this life, *conscience* becomes

dead through continued carelessness. Room is allowed by the Creator for the exercise of free will. God covets from us service for the sake of duty and love, and the penalty of the refusal is kept at a distance, so that duty and love may appear the sole immediate impelling motives. From whatever cause — wrong doing seems to remain unpunished; at times it even seems to triumph. Virtue is not seldom relegated into obscurity and poverty. The praises and blamings of the world follow the lives of success, rather than those of commandments. The thoughts of the mind, and the beatings of the heart, which are the truest tests of moral worth, are altogether hidden from the world. All earth's possessions, and all earth's fame cannot reward the heroism of the martyr who dies in the name of duty, while forgetfulness of duty extends before him the pathway of the present life.

If we judge virtue and vice by the standards of *earth*, not seldom will virtue appear as a delusion, and vice as the dictate of sense; not seldom will the sole rule, distinguishing the one from the other, be that which recent materialism provides; the rule of the pleasurable or the painful. Without sanctions, other than those of the present life, the definition of right conduct, submission to the eternal decrees of order, as the supreme will of the Creator, does not hold. And yet this is the sole definition which reason allows, and which puts virtue in regions of the soul, and inaccessible to passion or mere material profit. This and this alone is virtue; — to feel and do the right, to feel and do it, were the heavens at once to fall, and all earth to

vanish into nothingness. This alone is virtue, and for this earth has no reward, as it has no adequate punishment for acts contradictory to it.

The question more than all others which it interests mankind to solve is: What is there for us beyond the grave? The fleeting present is nothing; the permanent is everything. The future aim unveiled, the present becomes comprehensible, *and the purpose of life is revealed*. Is there no future, we live to eat, drink and be merry, or, a somewhat higher aim being desired, we live to secure a somewhat decorous felicity and meanwhile, without too much oblivion of self, to do here and there a few good turns to fellow men. Is there no future, even purposes such as those are scarcely proclaimable, since there are millions who cannot be merry, who can do no good to themselves or others, and in the light of this fact, the present life is but a worrying dream, a heart afflicting enigma. But, a future proved, the purpose of life delineates itself beneath the guiding rays of the sun of the new world.

Mankind has always believed in another world, and has gauged the value of the present by a reference to it.

Mankind living beneath the directing hand of an all-wise Providence, cannot have been led astray in a matter so serious, so necessary to rational existence, as is that of future being or non-being. If reason and the soul's instincts suffice not to give knowledge, God owed it to His own wisdom and to His love for His creatures to speak in other ways and to indicate the meaning and the purpose of this life. So called

philosophers persist in declaring life a riddle, in telling us that we know not whence we come or whither we are drifting, that we are as aimless and good for nothing as the moving sands of the seashore, as the dying leaves driven whithersoever by the autumnal winds. It is not so, and it cannot be so, for this is a world of reason and order, and the chief tenant of the creation cannot be the solitary exception to the general harmony; and moreover, despite all sophisms, the soul of man from its deepest depths, gives the lie to the teachings of fatalism and chance.

Above all voices that ever spoke to men, sweeter than all music, more soul penetrating than all eloquence, more authoritative and satisfying than all philosophy, there rose the voice of Jesus of Nazareth. I will not unfold to you His credentials. The voice of Jesus was that of the Son of God, Who became man, in order to bring more palpably before us the things of the supernatural world, and to lift us upward to it. O God, writing to the world, speak at once, tell us while we are young, tell us why we live. Jesus has told us, and they who are ignorant or uncertain, *hear not, see not.*

The burden of Christ's Gospel is this, that the soul is immortal; that the present life is temporary, probationary; that the lasting one is to come, and is to be confirmatory of the present; a life of bliss and reward, if right conduct has been our practice, a life of suffering and punishment, if wrong doing has marked our career. Beyond the grave there is the sanction of the moral law, as sure as there is the reign of God above

us. Conduct daily and hourly is the shaping of never ending existence. God's laws work out unerringly life or death, fruition of destiny or privation thereof, bliss or misery. The avalanche descending from Alpine heights, grinding in its passage adamantine rocks, comes surely, in the end, to the valley below. So does a life of sin drag the soul downward to Hell. This must be so, else virtue and vice are without sanction and meaning, and the God Whom we love and revere for His wisdom and goodness disappears from the universe.

Conduct assumes for each one of us, in the light of this teaching, an immense importance. All men have been made for happiness in the vision and possession of God. But not all reach Heaven, for not all take the road to Heaven or fit themselves for its blessedness. "There shall not enter into Heaven anything defiled, or that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they who are in the book of life, of the Lamb." Only the God-like soul could live the life of God. To be able to know, love and serve Him in Heaven, we must learn to know, love and serve Him on earth. How slight is the attention given to those duties! We study earth and sky; we read, we question, we reflect, in order to be proficient in branches of human knowledge; but as to the knowledge of God, and of His revelation, in search of it we devote little, if any, time. How vague and indefinite is our knowledge of what God requires from us, of the means of salvation which He has put at our disposal, of the commandments which He has imposed upon us: "We do as well as we know," is

a common expression upon our lips ; but, I ask, " Have we studiously and earnestly striven to know ? "

Have we observed every flash of light that passes across the mind, and have we followed its lead, that we might discover our full duty ? And when we do know, have we, preferring God's will to all things, loyally and unflinchingly obeyed ? If instead of God, we seek out our own ease and pleasure ; if we follow our own likes and dislikes, instead of His divine will, in vain do we aspire to Heaven, it never shall be ours.

It was this doctrine of man's future life which the Apostles of Christ made the burden of their preaching as they passed among the nations. It was this doctrine which gave to the Gospel a claim to be heard when first preached, which arrested the thoughtless multitudes who were busy in the pleasures and pursuits of life, and awed them with the vision of another life, until they turned to God with a true heart.

This doctrine of a future life was the doctrine which broke the power and fascination of paganism. " Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die," was the rule of life of the world before Christ. " To-morrow we die "—this the Apostles admitted ; but they added,— " and after death the judgment,"—judgment upon the eternal soul, which lives in spite of the death of the body. Is the world much wiser and better than the world of paganism ? It can boast indeed of ten thousand material accomplishments ; all these we admit and praise. But of what use are they if men are not brought nearer to their last end ? — Earth shines out in vain, if Heaven recedes the farther. After death the

judgment,—the looking into our record, our life on earth, to see whither it has led us,—whether to Heaven or to Hell. *Whither?*—this is for each of us the question of questions. Amen.

SERMON XIX

MAN'S TRUE LIFE ETERNAL LIFE

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.”—1 COR. 2, 9.

The laws imposed upon man by the Creator are the commands of wisdom and supreme order. They are the conditions of his living out the fullness of his being, and of his attainment of the destiny which is marked out for him in the counsels of the Infinite. This destiny attained, happiness is his lot, and in this happiness he receives the reward of righteous conduct.

What then is for man the fullness of being? What is his true life, the beginning of which is given on earth, the rich fruitage of which comes to him in the country beyond the grave? Man's true life enjoyed in its completeness — this is eternal life.

Man's true life is in his highest and noblest faculties, the intellect and the will — the intellect reaching out to truth, the will embracing it and adhering to it. Man comes under our notice as a bundle of varied faculties, powers and senses. Among these we must distinguish those which belong to the soul, as a spiritual being, differentiating man from the lower creation, and those which are common to him with the animal and material worlds; we must distinguish that which is per-

manent in him; and that which is temporary, serving only transient purposes. Vegetative and animal life is not man's proper life: the things which minister to it, earthly possessions, earthly enjoyments are not the proper objects of his longings and aspirations. Man is a rational being; intellect is his chief, his peculiar faculty — intellect is the power to know, to seek out truth, and to apprehend it.

What is truth? Truth is being: whatever is, is truth, and is the objective matter upon which the intellect is exercised. Being, apprehended as truth by the intellect, presents itself to the will of man as goodness. For whatever is, is, so far as it is being, good in itself and desirable to man. To complete the philosophy of being, I must add that all being at the same time that it is truth and goodness, is also beauty, or rather it is beauty because it is truth and goodness. Being is beautiful inasmuch as it charms the soul, and pours into it joy and contentment.

Now the soul consists essentially of those higher faculties of reaching out to what being there is, under its several aspects of truth and goodness and beauty, and necessarily we find in those faculties of the soul man's true life. I am aware that I am speaking a language difficult to be understood. In our present state the material and the animal overpower us. They darken our interior light: so that we scarcely see the supersensible; they occupy us, they distress us by their imperious demands, so that we almost forget the higher life, and when mention is made of it, the messenger hails, as it were, from an unknown country with which

we have but slight concern and in which we scarcely believe that we could be satisfied. *Nevertheless* when we at all reason upon things, we perceive clearly that material and animal surroundings and requirements are really things transient, things extrinsic to the soul, or spiritual nature, things accidental and conditional. *We* are first of all and above all, souls, reasoning and thinking creatures whose chief faculty to see things outside of self is intellect and whose true life is and must be the sequences of the exercise of intellect.

All that is, is truth, goodness and beauty. The universe is being, and man's soul goes out to it, to behold, love and admire. But what are its perfections but rays from the Incarnate Deity? The soul is not satisfied with knowing effects, without knowing the cause: it is not satisfied with the finite, and limited, without reaching up to the Infinite Himself. God is Being infinite, supreme, Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and towards Him are the soul's longings. He is the Alpha and the Omega of all creation, the beginning and the end of all creatures. Inferior creatures reach Him through man whom they serve; but man himself is so great that, endowed with the supernal wings of intellect and will, he soars directly unto the throne of the Almighty. Man's soul descends from God, and having lived out its life, rises again upward to the bosom of Divine Immensity. In the words of St. Augustine: "Our souls, O God, are made for Thee, and there is no rest until they repose in Thee."

Where is the fullness of life to be found? It is manifest that we have not this fullness of life in our

present condition. We are in a state of longing, of unrest, of struggling, seeking what we need, and what we do not possess. We are not in a state of happiness. Happiness is a signal of our arrival in our native home where all is possessed that has been hoped for, that the soul has sighed for. Its fullness comes upon the attainment of our destiny. It is complete satiation of longings, the fulfillment of desires, the reflection of the soul with all the good that it is capable of, the effacement of all emptiness in intellect and in will.

Happiness! Magic word which we all understand so well, because we all are driven by our natures to court it, and we have it not. The all-wise Creator assigning to a creature a purpose, a destiny, fashions the creature for it, and makes that the whole being should be impelled toward it, and no rest allowed away from it. Will the magnetised needle cease its troublous rotations until it faces the polar star? Neither will my soul rest, O God, away from Thee! "As the hart panteth after the fountain of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God." "My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God, when shall I come and appear before the face of my God?" But upon earth "we see through a glass, in a dark manner," "we know in part." We perceive God only through His works, and even so, in a manner most imperfect. The soul is not and cannot be satisfied. Nor will earthly goods themselves fill the vast sea-bed of our longings. They at best are limited, variable, perishable. Either they are not given, or they are given with stint, or they tire when possessed, or threatening to flee away, alarm in

the midst of possession and enjoyment. We are not happy on earth, "for we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."

Heaven! This is the sweet word that tells of the coming city, and of coming happiness. In Heaven we shall see God; no longer in His works, but in Himself: no longer through a glass in a dark manner, "but face to face." Seeing God the soul shall unite itself most intimately with God in love, and possessing Him, it shall be charmed with His supreme beauty and inundated with joys unspeakable.

The plain fact about Heaven which we learn from Divine Revelation is that we shall see God face to face. It is this immediate seeing of God's Being that theologians call the beatific or intuitive vision. Revelation, therefore, is in accord with our own reasoning in putting man's true life in the exercise of his noblest faculties, and in placing before us the object of this exercise, Infinite Being, Supreme Beauty, etc.

St. Paul says: "We now see through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face." "Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known." And St. John: "We are now the sons of God, but it doth not appear yet what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is." Our Lord Himself says: "The angels in heaven always see the face of my Father," and elsewhere we are told by Him that the just shall be as the angels, "this is eternal life," He says, "that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

“We shall be like to God.” The natural law of environment will work out a similarity of life and being in us with the life and being of God. We are created to His image and likeness, but now the image in us is dim. When, however, the soul, penetrated with divine grace, is exposed to the full splendors of God’s majesty, this image within us is brought out in all its richest colorings. Living continuously in the presence of God, the soul is transfused with divine light, and becomes holy, pure, resplendent of God’s own holiness, purity and beauty. The life of the beatified soul is of the same kind as God’s own life, which is to know and love His own eternal essence; and the happiness which comes from the eternal vision of His own Infinite perfections. Hence the Judge says to the just: “Enter into the joys of the Lord.”

Our trials and tribulations shall be forever ended and all that properly belongs to our being shall be accorded to it. All that shall be required for our bliss unimpaired shall be granted, and this bliss shall be unspeakably great in measure and everlasting in duration. As to the measure St. Paul writes: “That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for those who love him.”

Why, with these words before us, should we assay in plain words or brilliant metaphors to describe the joys of Heaven? It is enough to know that God shall be our inheritance, that His love and omnipotence shall be at our disposal. And then the certainty, that all these joys shall never have an end! “The just shall

go into everlasting life." Hope alone, even now, fills our hearts with sweetest comforts; what shall not be fruition of the realities.

What is of immediate importance to us is to shape our present conduct, so that the termination of life upon earth be for us the beginning of the life of Heaven. Thither are we called. All men have been made for happiness in the vision and possession of God. But not all reach Heaven, for not all take the road to Heaven or fit themselves for its blessedness. "There shall not enter into Heaven anything defiled or that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they who are written in the book of life, of the Lamb." Only the God-like soul could live the life of God. To be able to know, love and serve Him in Heaven, one must learn to know, love and serve Him on earth. How slight the attention given to those duties! We study earth and sky; we read one question, we reflect, in order to be proficient in branches of human knowledge. But as to the knowledge of God, and of His revelation, we give in seeking it, but little, if any time. How vague and indefinite is our knowledge of what God requires from us, of the means of salvation which He has put at our disposal, of the commandments which He has imposed upon us! "We do as well as we know," is a common expression upon our lips! But I ask, have we studiously and earnestly striven to know? Have we observed every flash of light that passes across the mind, and have we followed its lead, that we might discover its full duty? And when we do know, have we, preferring God's will to all things, loyally and unflinch-

ingly obeyed? If instead of God we seek out our own ease and pleasure and follow our own likes and dislikes instead of His divine will, in vain do we aspire to Heaven; it never shall be ours. It was this doctrine of man's future life, which the Apostles of Christ made the burden of their preaching as they passed through the nations. It was this doctrine which gave the Gospel a claim to be heard when first preached, which arrested the thoughtless multitudes, who were busied in the pleasures and pursuits of life, and awed them with a vision of another life, until they turned to God with a true heart. This doctrine of a future life was the doctrine which broke the power and fascination of paganism. "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die," was the rule of life of the world before Christ. "To-morrow we die," *this* the Apostles admitted; but they added—"and after death the judgment"—judgment upon the eternal soul which lives in spite of the death of the body. Is the world much wiser and better than the world of paganism? It can boast indeed of ten thousand material accomplishments; all these we admit and praise. But of what use are they if men are not brought nearer to the last end? Earth shines out in vain if Heaven recedes the further. "After death the judgment," the looking into our record, our life on earth to see whither it has led us, whether to Heaven or to Hell. Whither?—This is for each of us the question of questions. Amen.

SERMON XX

THE MOTHER OF SORROWS *

"There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother."—JOHN 19, 26.

The beauty of Jesus is inexhaustible. He is beautiful always, beautiful everywhere, in the disfigurement of the Passion as well as in the splendor of the Resurrection. But above all things Our Divine Saviour is beautiful in His Mother. If we love Him, we must love her. We must know her in order to know Him. As there is no true devotion to His Sacred Humanity, which is not mindful of His Divinity, so there is no adequate love of the Son, which disjoins Him from His Mother, and lays her aside as a mere instrument.

Mary was not an unconscious instrument of the designs which God accomplished through her. Before she consented to become the Mother of Jesus, *Mary* understood the ransom that must be paid for sinners, she foresaw the sorrows with which the sufferings of her Son would desolate her soul, and in consenting to coöperate with God in the work of salvation, she willingly accepted the lifelong martyrdom which the crucifixion caused her to endure.

The Catholic view of this question must be clearly

* *Vide* "Foot of the Cross," Faber.

brought out before Christians can properly understand the relation in which she stands to the redeemed. It is what Mary consented to suffer, and actually did suffer that gives her a right to the gratitude and devotion of Christians, that makes her intercession all powerful with Christ, and shows that the confidence which Catholics repose in the patronage of the Blessed Virgin is well founded.

What did Mary suffer? St. Liguori applies to her the words of Isaias: "He will crown thee with the crown of tribulation"—will crown her Queen of Martyrs. That we may know how hard it is to form any adequate idea of Mary's sorrows, the Church applies to her the words of the Prophet Jeremias: "To what shall I compare thee, to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I equal thee, O Virgin daughter of Sion? For great as the sea is thy broken-heartedness."

Who can measure the sea? While sailing across its wide expanse, the largest vessel seems but an atom on its bosom. In sight is a great waste of water, which is but a fraction of that other mighty waste of water which the horizon conceals from view. At certain points, the length, breadth and depth of the sea may be measured, while at other points it stretches out and sinks down so far and so irregularly as to baffle all human efforts to accurately estimate its volume. Thus the sea, while not infinite in extent, is, humanly speaking, immeasurable.

This is why the sea is truly a picture of Mary's broken-heartedness. Now and again, definite views

are obtained of certain features of Mary's sorrows, which for the moment seem to offer some basis for an accurate estimate of all her sufferings. When, however, an attempt is made to measure them, other aspects of the depth, the intensity, and the duration of her dolors are revealed in such bewildering proportions as to render futile all efforts to measure the sea of her broken-heartedness. Meditation thus shows us, that Mary's sorrow, although falling short of the infinite, is measureless.

The factors that help us to form a faint, an imperfect idea of Mary's sufferings are:—(1) Mary's sanctity; (2) Jesus' loveliness; (3) Mary's foreknowledge of Christ's sufferings, and her willingness to participate in them.

As disease dulls and deadens the nerves, the sensitiveness of the body to pain, until in certain forms of sickness the power to suffer is diminished, destroyed, so that the body of the afflicted one may be cut and burned without feeling any pain; so sin destroys the feelings of the heart, dries up the fountains of compassion in the soul until the very power to sympathize with another is diminished or altogether lost. As the greatest capacity for physical sufferings exists in the perfect body, so the greatest capacity for mental anguish exists in the soul.

Mary was sinless, preserved by a singular privilege from all stain of sin. Her soul remained unclouded by even a shadow of an imbruting passion. She not only retained all the natural feelings of her pure heart unimpaired, but she cultivated them to the highest

degree that it was possible for a creature to attain. The more refined, delicate the soul, the more excruciating the agony. Mary's sinless body with its exquisite perfections was delicately formed beyond all others but that of her Son. It is therefore evident that Mary, both by nature and grace, had the greatest capacity of love, to sympathize, and to suffer; and as she had consecrated herself entirely to God there were neither worldly interest, nor human ties to distract or divide her love. It was centered wholly in Jesus.

The maternal instinct impels mothers, sometimes, to love, to cling to their children despite the latter's utter unworthiness and depravity. Mary, however, loved Jesus because He was infinitely worthy of her affection. No mother ever had such a Son. Mary's Son was both human and divine—"the splendor of the Father's glory and the figure of His substance,"—at once the Son of Mary and the Son of God. In Mary there was concentrated, as in one consuming flame, the strongest affection which a mother ever cherished for a child, and the intensest love that a Creature ever bore the Creator. And since it was impossible for greater love to exist between two beings than that which existed between Mary and Jesus, there could be no greater sympathy than that of Mary and Jesus. Every suffering inflicted on the Sacred Humanity of Jesus was a sword of sorrow that pierced Mary's soul.

But in order to see how immeasurable Mary's sufferings were, we must acquire some idea of her foreknowledge of Christ's Passion, of her willingness to participate in it, of the heroic, holy purpose that ani-

mated Mary when she consented to coöperate, to suffer, in the cause of man's salvation.

Mary's sanctity entitled her to the fullest confidence of the Deity, as to the means by which the world's redemption was to be accomplished. While God conceals His counsels from the proud and wicked, He confides them to the humble and innocent. Mary was selected because of her humility. She was full of grace; she had found favor with God. Upon no creature has such an eulogy been passed as that which God the Father, by the mouth of the Archangel Gabriel, pronounced upon Mary. No creature was ever admitted to that close and marvelous union that existed between Mary and the Eternal Father. Living only for God, and in God, it may well be believed that secrets were committed to her of which priests and prophets were kept in ignorance; just as Jesus communicated to John, by reason of his virginal sanctity, secrets concerning which the other Apostles dared not even question their Master. It may well be believed that Mary knew more than the prophets of old, upon whose vivid portrayals of the sufferings of the Messiah she had often meditated; that she knew more than Joseph, who learned from the Angel that Jesus would "save His people from their sins"; that she knew more than Simeon, whose vision of the Passion enabled him in those forcible, expressive words, to liken Mary's sympathy with Jesus in His suffering to a sword of sorrow that would pierce her soul.

While the Apostles were often, during the lifetime of their Master, rebuked for their slowness to believe,

their failure to understand, never once was Mary's faith or understanding rebuked. On the contrary she is represented as keeping the divine counsels, pondering them in her heart. Mary showed in the *Magnificat* and at Cana the fullest appreciation of His divine character and of His coming.

The extent of Mary's knowledge is not a mere matter of speculation. It is a matter of fact that, before the Incarnation, she was the only daughter of Israel that entertained a correct notion of the character of Messias. The other women of Judea regarded the coming Messias as a great temporal prince. Hence as the time of His coming approached, a consuming desire to be the mother of the Messias burned in the breast of every Jewish woman. With this object in view, the maid sought marriage, the wife prayed for fruitfulness, and implored the Lord to save her from sterility as from a curse.

No such ambition, as Cardinal Newman says, was cherished by Mary. On the contrary, by a vow of virginity, she had made her mothership of the Messias, humanly speaking, impossible. She had such a true conception of that exalted Divinity that she deemed perpetual continence and a life of sanctification in the temple necessary to prepare herself, not for the mothership of the Messias, but to become the handmaid, the servant of the woman whom God would deem worthy of so high an honor. In this, what testimony does not Mary bear to that incomparable dignity to which God, regarding her humility, exalted her. No less an authority than Cardinal Newman interprets

Mary's reply to the Angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," as signifying that Mary simply aspired to become the servant of the Mother of the Messias.

If Mary entertained such correct ideas of the Messias before the Angel's visit, what fullness of knowledge must she not have received through Gabriel's message and his answers to her questions. Her dialogue with the Archangel shows plainly that she was not selected as a mere instrument, but as a free, intelligent agent; that she was free to refuse to become the Mother of the Messias, and that she consented only after having attained to a clear understanding of what would be required of her.

"*She was troubled;*" says the Gospel, at the Angel's words, and asked, in her own mind, the meaning of his salutation. The angel having allayed her fears, Mary asked plainly: "How shall this be done, for I know not man?" Mary did not blindly consent, like the Apostles, to participate in the work of the Messias, and afterwards, like them, fail in her part when it came to drink of the cup of Christ's bitterness. She consented only after she had known what sacrifice that consent would demand of her; and therefore she never afterwards shrank from what was laid upon her: — "Be it done unto me according to Thy word."

It is clear that Mary could have absolutely refused to become the Mother of the Messias, nevertheless, her acceptance was so deliberate, was given with such full knowledge of the sufferings which it involved, and with such willing obedience to the Counsel of God; and consequently, was so meritorious, that the Holy

Ghost, by the mouth of Elizabeth, declared Mary blessed for having consented: "Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished in thee which were spoken to thee by the Lord."

Let those, then, that would form an idea of her sorrows, look at Mary, from the moment of the Incarnation, standing in spirit as truly under the Cross as when she stood by the Cross of Jesus on Mt. Calvary. During those thirty-four years of martyrdom, her knowledge of Jesus' sufferings did not increase, but her realization of them became more and more vivid and painful in proportion as she beheld Jesus increase in wisdom, and age, and grace before God and man. Her power to love and her power to suffer increased day by day, until she saw Jesus offer Himself a bleeding, dying victim on the Cross.

What more touching, entrancing, than the scene enacted in the stable of Bethlehem. The winter winds were joyful with the music of the multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." The dismal cave was lighted up with the glory of Heaven; angels and wondering, adoring shepherds came to worship the new-born Saviour; and Mary and Joseph lovingly, adoringly contemplated the Heavenly Babe. Had that scene, which has filled the earth for centuries with light and gladness, no joy for Mary? Did not its splendor for the time being dispel the shadow of the Cross? Did not Mary, in the words of Holy Scripture, rejoice, "because a man was

born into the world," and for the moment, turn the eye of her soul from the vision of Calvary?

Alas! no, the joyous light of Bethlehem only projected the shadow of the Cross more distinctly. The scene in the stable, it is true, touched Mary's soul, joy welled up in her heart, but only that the thought of Calvary might instantly change it into an ocean of bitterness. As Mary laid the Divine Infant in the manger, as she saw His little arms stretched out as if to embrace her, she thought of the time when that same Jesus would be laid upon the Cross, when His hands would be stretched out in cruelest torture, in infinite love, to embrace the whole human race; as she listened to the song of the Angels, she thought of the blasphemies with which men would demand His death; as she looked on the reverent shepherds she thought of the wild beasts that put Him to death; as she looked on the glory of Heaven lighting the first opening of His eyes, she thought of the gloom that would fall upon their closing; as she saw earth and Heaven rejoicing over His birth, she thought of how both man and God would forsake Him in death; as she clasped Him to her bosom, she thought of the time when He would be laid at last, all bleeding and bruised, and wounded and lifeless, on her breast. Thus even at Bethlehem, Mary stood in the shadow of the Cross.

There are pictures, some of which are regarded as inspired in their conception and miraculous in their salutary influence, that afford clearer views of Mary's ever present sorrows than any illustration that human

tongue can offer. The painting of *Our Lady of Perpetual Help*, for example, represents the Blessed Virgin as revolving in her mind the prophecies concerning the Messias. With a face full of sweetness and sadness, she gazes upon the Child Jesus Whom she holds upon her arm, only to see Him startle at the vision of His future sufferings, the instruments of His Passion—the reed, the crown of thorns, the nails, the spear, the Cross,—as they loom up in the dim distance.

Then again, there is the painting that may be called *the Shadow of the Cross*. It represents a scene in the workshop at Nazareth. Joseph is employed at the carpenter's bench, Mary sits plying the distaff. A bright summer day pours a flood of light into the room. Jesus, a beautiful youth, with filial piety informing every feature, advances with out-stretched arms towards His Mother to embrace her, and to imprint a kiss upon her cheek. Oh! what happiness would this scene have been to Mary, with what joy would it have dilated her soul, if only the future had been concealed from her! But, alas! looking at Jesus, the Mother's joy is turned into grief, because she sees the body and out-stretched arms of her Son cast the Shadow of the Cross on the opposite wall!

But if this was Mary's cruel portion during the joyful mysteries, who can imagine what must have been the bitterness of her grief during those cruel scenes that followed, when every torture of Jesus, like a sword, actually pierced her soul.

The Passion of our Lord may be said to begin on the Thursday in Holy Week in the house of Lazarus

at Bethany. On that Thursday morning Jesus went to Bethany to bid His Mother farewell and to obtain her consent to His Passion, as He had before done to His Incarnation. Not that it was necessary, but it was fitting and convenient to the perfection of His filial obedience. He then went to Jerusalem with His disciples. The Last Supper, the First Mass, took place that night. Having celebrated the Passover He passed out of the city again with His disciples to Mount Olivet where Judas betrayed Him. He was seized by the mob and conducted to the court of the High Priest. *St. John*, as soon as Jesus had been condemned to death, returned to the house with the news of the sentence. Mary, the broken-hearted Mother, prepares to leave the house with Magdalen and the Apostle. John, by his knowledge of the city, will lead her to the end of the street where she can meet Jesus on His road to Calvary.

Everywhere the streets are thronged with multitudes setting in one tide to Calvary. Heralds at the corner of the streets blow their harsh trumpets, and proclaim the sentence to the people. What a journey for a mother. The procession comes in sight; the tall horse of the centurion shows first, and leads the way. The trumpet sounds with a wailing clangor. The women look from the lattice above. She sees the thieves, the crosses, everything — and yet only one thing — Himself. As He draws nigh the peace of her heart grows deeper. It could not help it; God was approaching, and peace went before Him. Now, Jesus has come up to her. He halts for a moment.

He lifts the one hand that is free, and clears the blood from His eyes. Is it to see her? Rather that she may see Him, His look of sadness, His look of love. She approaches to embrace Him. The soldiers thrust her rudely back. And she is His mother. For a moment she reeled with the push, and then again was still, her eyes fixed on His, His eyes fixed on hers, such a look, such an embrace, such an outpouring of love, such an overflow of sorrow. Has He less strength than she? Yes. He staggers, is overweighed by the burden of the ponderous Cross, and falls with a dull dead sound upon the street, like the clang of falling wood. She sees it. The God of Heaven and earth is down. Men surround Him like butchers round a fallen beast; they kick Him, beat Him, drag Him up again with cruel ferocity. It is His third fall. She sees it. He is her Babe of Bethlehem. She is helpless. She cannot get near. The terror of this scene to Mary beggars description. We must not forget that her heart was eminently feminine. Fancy the sea of wild faces into which she looked in those crowded streets. Every passion was glaring out of those ferocious eyes, rendered more horrible by their human intelligence mingled with the inhuman fiery stare of diabolical possession. A multitude, with the women, possibly the children, all athirst for blood, raving after it, yelling for it as only a maddened populace can yell. It was a very vent of Hell, that voice of theirs, a concourse of the most appalling sounds of rage and hate and murder, and blasphemy and imprecation, and of that torturing fire and their own hearts which those passions had

fiercely lighted up. The sights and sounds thrilled through her with agonies of fear. Visible by her blue mantle, she floats about on the billows of that tossing crowd, like a piece of wreck on the dark weltering waters of a storm. And she is apart from Jesus. He is perishing in the waves of that turbulent people. He is engulfed, and she can stretch out no hand to save Him. She cannot yet hear Him, and thus she followed slowly on to Calvary, Magdalen and John beside themselves with grief, but feeling as if grace went out from her blue mantle, enabling them also to live with broken hearts.

The way of the Cross was ended, and Christ was raised on the Tree of Shame. Mary turned to the foot of the Cross, passing the soldiers who were casting lots for the seamless garment of her Son. She raised her eyes to Heaven for strength, and they met the eyes of her Crucified Son. Upon beholding Jesus fastened to the Cross, she stood speechless, riveted to the spot by this cruel spectacle. Everything disappeared before the Cross;—the sun veiled its gaze in very shame,—the heavens became dark,—the earth quaked, the rocks were rent asunder, the graves gave up their dead. All nature seemed to participate in Mary's grief and to suffer with her. The multitude were terrified and fled down the mountain striking their breasts, saying: "He was truly the Son of God."

Yet amidst the wild confusion caused by nature sympathizing with the dying Saviour,—caused by the earthquakes which shook Golgatha's mount to its very

foundation—Mary remained unmoved, with hands folded in prayer, sunk in meditation on her Crucified Love, and the few pious women of Jerusalem wept, and said with compassion: The poor Mother!—

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, as a pious writer tells us, approached Our Blessed Lady with the profoundest reverence and sympathy and asked her permission to take the Body down from the Cross. They fixed the ladder against the Cross. Joseph mounted first and Nicodemus after him. Mary with John and Magdalen remained immediately beneath them. It seemed as if some supernatural grace issued forth from the adorable Body, softening and subduing all their thoughts, making their hearts burn with divine love, and hushing them in the deepest and most thrilling adoration.

With gentle, trembling hand Joseph touched the Crown of thorns, and delicately loosened it from the head on which it was fixed, disentangled it from the matted hair, and without daring to kiss it passed it to Nicodemus, who reached it to John, from whom Mary, sinking on her knees, receives it with such devotion as no heart but hers could hold. Every blood stained spike seemed instinct with life, and went into her heart, tipped as it were with the Blood of her Son, inoculating her more and more deeply with the spirit of His Passion. Who can describe with what reverential touch Joseph loosened the nails so as not to crush those blessed hands and feet? Each nail was silently passed down to Mary, and the poor Mother bent over those mute relics crusted, too, as they were with the

Precious Blood which she adored in its unbroken union with the Person of the Eternal Word.

But now the Body was detached from the Cross. Mary is kneeling on the ground. Her fingers are stained with blood. She stretches the clean linen cloth over her arms and holds them out to receive her Son, her lost Son, come back again, and come back thus! — Now the Body is low enough for John to touch the Sacred Head, and receive It in his arms, that It might not drop in that helpless rigid way; and Magdalen is holding up the feet. It is her old post. It is her post in Heaven now, highest of penitents, most beautiful of pardoned spirits! For one moment Mary prostrates herself in an agony of speechless adoration, and the next instant she has received the Body in her extended arms. The Babe of Bethlehem is back again in His Mother's lap. What a meeting! What a restoration! For a while she remains kneeling, while John and Magdalen, Joseph and Nicodemus and the devout women adore, and whisper: "The poor Mother!" Then she passes from the attitude of the priest to the attitude of the Mother. She rises from her knees still bearing the burden as lightly as when she fled into Egypt, and sits down upon the grass, with Jesus extended upon her lap.

There was not a feature of His Blessed Countenance, not a mark upon His Sacred Flesh, which was not at once a sorrow to her, and a very volume of profoundest meditations. In vain for her were the birds thrilling their even-song, the weight of the eclipse being taken off their blithe little hearts. In vain for her

were the perfumes of the tender fig-leaves rising up in the cold air, and the buds bursting greenly, and the tender shoots full of vernal beauty. Her grief was past nature's soothing. For her Flower had been cruelly gathered and lay withered there upon her knee.

But now He must be swathed in the winding sheet for burial and Mary must take her last look at that dead face. Mothers live lives in their last looks. Who shall tell what Mary's was like? With heroic effort she has bound the napkin around His head, and has folded the winding sheet over the sweet face. And now there is darkness indeed around her. The very Body had been a light and a support. She has put out the light herself. Her own hands have quenched the lamp, and she stands facing the thick night. O, brave woman! O Mary thou didst pierce thy own heart through and through, with the same hand which hid His face! — And the women wept again with compassion and said: "The Poor Mother."

Poor! but through whom? Through us my friends! He was bruised for our sakes, says the prophet, and our sins crucified Him, killed Him; and Mary the Queen of prophets should not have known this? She knew it well and felt the sufferings of her Son, inflicted by our sins all the more keenly. What reason have we not then for sorrow, for the profoundest grief, the bitterest tears over our sins which have robbed this good Mother of her Son? —

In the city of Padua in Italy, St. Francis de Sales relates, is a street called the Road of Mercy. It received its name from the following incident. Two

university students met one dark night, and without recognizing each other fell into a quarrel, because neither would get out of the way of the other — with the result that one stabbed the other one to death. The murderer pursued by the authorities fled in despair to the house of a widow whose only son was his fellow student and best friend. He threw himself at her feet, told what he had done, and begged her to hide him. The good woman took pity on him and concealed him in her house. It was not long before her only son was brought home to her dead, for it was he whom the student had stabbed. Sobbing aloud she went to the murderer and said: “What did my poor son do that you have so cruelly murdered him?” But when he heard that it was his own dear friend, he broke down with grief, tore his hair, and instead of asking the good mother’s forgiveness, he threw himself at her feet and begged her to deliver him over to the hands of the Justice, in order that he might publicly expiate his crime. The grief-stricken mother, who was a most Christian lady, was so touched by the evident sincere grief of the youth that she said: “If you beg God’s forgiveness and promise to amend your life, I will allow you to go free.” He made the promise and obtained his liberty.

My friends, we have also robbed a poor Mother of her only Son, the Son of Mary, Who loved us as our best friend, more than life,—we have by our sins crucified Him. We might have died a thousand times, we might have forfeited eternal life, but the Mother to whom we took refuge, the Mother of Sorrows, re-

jected us not and promised to allow us to go away forgiven provided we beg God's forgiveness, and amend our lives.

Let the redeemed learn then what they owe to Mary. Let them think of the sufferings that she endured for thirty-four years, in consequence of her maternal instincts leading her to most earnestly desire that the chalice of suffering might pass from her Divine Son, while her obedience to the divine counsels and her devotion to man's salvation, doing a holy violence to her love, forced her to say: "Let the will of the Father be done; let my Son suffer death to redeem His people from their sins;" thus making it her higher love to do the will of God than to enjoy the companionship of Jesus.

Let them look often and thoughtfully upon the scene on Mount Calvary! Let them meditate on Mary's holy heroism. Let them think of her as a woman, weak in her sex, as a mother wounded in her tenderest affections, as sorrowful unto death, yet tearless, unwavering in her purpose to fulfill the promise made to God through Gabriel, willing to drain the chalice of affliction, resolved to witness the end, to see Jesus blot out the handwriting against sinners with the Most Precious Blood, to stand by the Cross until she heard: *Consummatum est*, It is finished,—until she saw her Son become the Saviour of the world, and the children of wrath become the children of God, until the death of Jesus left her amid the shadows of Calvary in a desolation so unutterable that the earth has no name for its anguish.

Let Christians look upon Mary crowned by Jesus on Calvary, in the words of Isaias, "with the crown of tribulation," and then they will understand why Mary takes an interest in their spiritual welfare; why she jealously guards the affairs of their salvation in life; why she bends all her energies at the hour of death to protect souls from the assaults of the Demon. Then they will understand why that unfailing devotion which Mary displayed from Nazareth to Calvary, to the cause of the world's redemption, she now exhibits in behalf of each and every one redeemed,—to the end that the Precious Blood of Jesus shall not have been shed for any soul in vain. Amen.

SERMON XXI

“THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED”

“But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”—ISAIAH II, 31.

The eagle is the king of birds; he is the most powerful, flies the highest, apparently comes in fact from the skies. He has the sharpest and most penetrating eye and not only soars himself to the sun, but takes his young to the sun in order to accustom them to its rays and to warm them. For this reason the eagle is a spiritual symbol of omnipotence and omniscience, in a word, a symbol of the Divine Spirit. In the second book of Moses, the Lord says: “You have seen how I have born you on wings of the eagle and have brought you to me.”

But since the Spirit of God is essentially the Spirit of love, and in the words of the Holy Fathers God has poured forth the fullness of His Spirit into the heart of the beloved disciple John, the eagle has been given to the Evangelist John as his symbol, for he did not soar alone in spirit to the sun of eternal love, but endeavored to bring all his brethren, and mankind with him to warm their hearts with divine love, so that the words of the prophet were verified in him: “Those

who love the Lord receive new strength, that they may soar aloft like the eagle."

On the banks of the fresh waters of the Tiberian Sea, which abounded with fish, lived a family by the name Zebedaeus, who had two sons, James and John. They were fishermen by trade, John, the younger was like an angel on whose countenance, as St. Augustine says, was reflected that divine beauteous harmony, which a pure soul produces in a chaste body. He was about twenty-five years old and was mending the nets in his boat, when the Saviour approached him, and called him to Him. John obeyed at once, left all and followed the Lord. He became an Apostle of the Lord and nevermore departed from Him. He accompanied his Lord and Master to Mount Olivet, and when Judas betrayed his Master, John followed Him to the court of the high priest, and accompanied Him to Calvary, and to him I turn my heart and my thoughts to-night.

John was destined to be, through all ages, and unto all nations, a type of what the true Christian man, the friend of Christ, must be; a true representative of the part he must play, in the sacrifice that from time to time he must make, to test the strength and tenderness of his love. He was young and beautiful, but did not flinch from his Master and Lord in that hour of suffering; he walked by His side; he shared in the reproaches that were showered upon the head of the Son of God, and took his share of the grief and shame of that terrible morning of Good Friday. The Master permitted him to be there, that He might, as it were,

lean upon the strength of his manhood and the fearlessness of his love. Behold him, as, with the virginal eyes, he looks up as a man to his fellowman on the Cross! Behold him as he seems to say: "O Master! O Lover of my soul and heart! Can I relieve You of a single sorrow by taking it up and making it my own?" This was John. Consider who he was and what he was.

Three graces surrounded him as he stood at the foot of the Cross. Three divine gifts formed a halo of heavenly light around his head. They were the grace of Christian purity, the grace of divine love, and the manliness of the bravery that despises the world, when it is a question of giving testimony of love and of fidelity to his God and his Saviour,—three noble gifts, with which the world is so ill-supplied to-day!

The virtue of angelic purity Christ our Lord came to establish upon earth. This virtue did He lay as the foundation of His Church in a chaste and virginal priesthood, preserving the integrity of the soul in the purity of the body. This virtue belonged to St. John, the "Disciple of Love"; and it belonged to him in its highest phase; for as the Fathers and notably St. Peter Damascus tell us, in John the Evangelist from the cradle to the grave, no thought of human love ever flashed through his mind. No angry uprising of human passion ever disturbed the equable nature of his heavenly tempered soul and body. He was the youngest of all the Apostles; and he was little more than a youth when the virgin-creating eyes of Christ fell upon him, and Christ looked upon him and saw a virginal

body, fair and beautiful in its translucent purity and innocence. He the Creator and Redeemer saw a soul, pure and bright and unstained; a soul just opening into manhood, and in the full possession of all its powers; and a tender, yet most pure heart unfolded itself, even as the lily bursts forth and unfolds its white leaves to gather in its cup the dews of heaven, like diamond drops in its heart of purest whiteness. So did our Lord behold the fair soul of John. Jesus Christ spoke in the virgin ear the words of invitation; and into that virgin soul He dropped those graces of apostleship and of love and of tenderness and of strength, that lying there amongst those petals of glory, brought forth in the soul of the young man all that was radiant of Christ-like virtue. A virgin, that is to say, one who never let a thought of his mind, nor an affection of his heart stray from the highest form of divine love; thus was he before he had beheld the face of his Redeemer. But when to that virginal purity, which naturally seeks the love of God in its highest form, that God Himself visible in the shape of the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, when the virgin's King, the Prince and the Leader of the virgin's choir in Heaven, presented Himself to the eyes of the young Apostle, oh, then, with the instinct of purity his heart seemed to go forth from him and to seek the heart of Christ. And so it was for three years, under the purifying eyes of our Lord. He lived for three years in the most intimate communication of love with his Master; distinguished from all other Apostles, of whom we do not know that every one of them was a virgin, but only John; distinguished

from them by being admitted, through his privileged virginal purity, into the inner chambers of the heart of Christ. Thus when our Lord appeared to the Apostles upon the waters all the others shrank from Him terrified; and they said to one another, "It is a ghost! it is an apparition." John looked and instantly recognized his Master, and said to Peter: "Fear not; It is the Lord!" Whereupon St. Jerome says: "What eyes were those of John, that could see that which others could not see? Oh, it was the eye of a virgin recognizing a virgin"! So it was that a certain tacit privilege was granted to John, as is seen in the conduct of the Apostles themselves. Peter was certainly honored above all others by getting precedence and supremacy; by being appointed the vicar and representative of his Master; in other words, "the Head of the Apostles." Nay more, the heart of Peter was sounded to the very depths of its capacity and of its love, before Christ our Lord appointed him as His representative. Three times did He ask him, "Lovest thou Me? Again in the presence of John, Lovest thou Me more than these?" More than these; more than the men who are present before me, and of whom I speak to you. And Peter was confirmed in that hour, and rose by divine grace to a height in the sight of his Divine Master, greater than any ever attained by man. It is not the heart of the man loving the Lord, but, it is the heart of the Lord loving the man. So Peter was called upon to love his Lord more than the others. But the tenderest love of his Divine Master was the privilege of John. He was the disciple "whom Jesus

loved." And did his fellow Apostles know it? What a privilege was not that which was given to John at the Last Supper because of his virginal purity? There was the Master, and there were the disciples around Him. There was the man whom He had destined to be His first vicar,—the representative of His power and head of His followers. Did Peter get first place? No! The first place of love nearest to the Sacred Heart was the privilege of John. And Oh! the ineffable dignity vouchsafed by Our Saviour to His virgin friend,—the head of the disciple was laid upon the breast of the Master, and the human ear of John heard the pulsations of the virginal Heart of Christ, the Lord of Heaven and earth. Between these two in life, you may easily see in this and other such traits recorded in the Gospel between these two, the Master and the disciple whom He loved, there was silent intercommunion,—an intensity of tender love of which the other Apostles seem not to have known. Out of this very purity of John sprang the love of his Divine Master. It was after His Resurrection that our Lord asked Peter, "Dost thou love Me more than these?" Before the suffering of the Son of God, Peter not yet confirmed in love, wavered in his allegiance and denied his Master: John's love knew no change. Peter's love had first to be humbled, and purified by tears, and his heart broken by contrition before he was able to assert: "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee!" But in the love of St. John we find an undoubting, an unchanging love. What his Master was to him in the hour

of His glory, the same was He in the hour of His shame. He beheld his Lord, shining on the summit of Tabor on the day of His Transfiguration: yet he loved Him as dearly when he beheld Him covered with shame and confusion on the Cross! What was the nature of that love? Oh, my friends, think what was the nature of that love! It had taken possession of a mighty but an empty heart. Mighty in its capacity of love is the heart of man — the heart of the young man — the heart of the ingenious, talented and enlightened youth. Would you know of how much this heart is capable? Behold it in the saints of the Catholic Church. Behold it in every man who gives his heart to God wholly and entirely. Behold it even in the sacrifices that young hearts make when they are filled with merely human love. Behold it in the sacrifice of life, of health, of everything which a man has, which is made upon the altar of love, even when human love has taken the base, revolting form of impurity. But measure, if you can, the ardor of pure love of Jesus Christ. I address the heart of the young man, and he cannot see it. The truth lies here, that the most licentious and self-indulgent sinner on the face of the earth, has never known in the indulgence of his wildest excesses, the full contentment, the complete enjoyment, the mighty faculty of love which is in the heart of man, and which God alone can satisfy.

Such was the heart which our Lord called to Him. Such was the heart of John. It was a capacious heart. It was the heart of a young man. It was empty. No human love there. No previous affection came in to

cross or counteract the designs of God in the least degree, or to take possession of even the remotest corner of that heart. Then finding it thus empty in its purity, thus capacious in its nature, the Son of God filled the heart of the young Apostle with His love. Oh, it was the rarest, the grandest friendship that bound together two virgin hearts, the heart of the beloved disciple, John; the grand virgin love which absorbed John's affections, filling his young heart and intellect with the beauty and the highest appreciation of his Lord and Master, filling his heart with the charms ineffable produced by the sight of the face of the Holy One. He looked upon the beauty of that Sacred and Divine Humanity; and he saw with the penetrating eyes of the intellect the fullness of the *Divinity* which flashed upon him. He had listened to the words of the Divine Master, and sweeter were they than the music which he had heard in Heaven, and which he describes in the Apocalypse, where he says: “I heard the sound of many voices, and of harpers harping upon many harps.” Far sweeter than the echoes of Heaven, that descended into his soul on the Isle of Patmos, was the noble, manly voice of his Lord and Master, now pouring forth blessings upon the poor, now telling those who sorrow that they shall one day be comforted, now whispering to the widow of Naim, “Weep no more,” now telling the penitent Magdalen, “Thy sins are forgiven thee, because thou hast loved much,” now thundering in the Temple of Jerusalem, until the very walls resounded to the God-like voice of Him Who said: “It is written that my house is a house of prayer, but

you have made it a den of thieves"; it was still the loftiest music and melody, the harmonious roll of the voice of God, as it fell on the charmed ears of the enraptured Evangelist, the young man who followed his Master and fed his soul upon that divine love. Out of this divine love sprang the inseparable fellowship that bound him to Christ. Not for an instant was he voluntarily absent from his Master's side. Not for an instant did he separate himself from the immediate society of his Lord. And herein lay the secret of his love; for love, be it human or divine, craves for union, and lives in the sight and in the conversation of the object of its affection. Consequently, of all the Apostles John was the one who was always clinging about his Master, always trying to be near Him, always trying to catch the loving eyes of Christ in every glance. This was the light of his brightness, the divine wisdom that animated him.

How distinct is the action of St. John in the hour of the Passion from that of St. Peter: "Peter," He says, "before the cock crows thou wilt deny me thrice." No wonder the Master's voice struck terror in the heart of the Apostle. And yet, strange to say, it did not make him prudent, or cautious. When our Lord was taken prisoner, the Evangelist expressly tells us that Peter followed Him. Followed Him? Indeed he followed him; but he followed Him afar off. He waited on the outskirts of the crowd. He tried to conceal his features, lest any man might lay hold on him, and make him a prisoner, as the friend of the Redeemer. He began to be afraid of the danger of acknowledging

himself to be the servant of such a Master. He began to think of himself, when every thought of his mind and every energy of his heart should have been concentrated upon his Lord. He followed Him; but at some distance. *John* wanted to take the Master's hand, even when bound by the thorns, that he might receive the vivifying touch of contact with Christ. *John* wanted to hear every word that might be said, whether it was for or against him, wanted to feast his eyes upon every object which engaged the attention of his Lord, and by Whose look it was irradiated — a type, indeed, of a class of Christian men seeking the society and presence of his Master, and strengthened by their seeking and that presence. He is the type of the man who goes frequently to Holy Communion, preparing himself by a good confession, and laying the basis of a sacramental union with God, that becomes a large element of his life, the man who goes to the altar every month, the man who is familiar with Christ and who enters somewhat into the inner chambers of that Sacred Heart of infinite love; the man who knows what those few moments of rapture are which are reserved for the pure; for those who not only serve God, but serve Him lovingly and well. Those are the men who walk in the footsteps of *John*; those are his representatives. *Peter* is represented by the men who go to Communion once a year — going at Easter and then returning to the world again. God grant that neither the world, nor the flesh, nor the devil will take possession of the days, or weeks, or years of the rest of his life, of him who gives once a year perhaps an hour

or two to earnest communion with God, and for all the rest only a passing consideration, flashing momentarily across the current of his life. And what was the consequence? *John* went up to Calvary and took the proudest place that ever was given to man. Peter met in the outer hall a servant maid, and she said to him, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." The moment that the child's voice fell upon his ear, he denied his Master, and he swore an oath that he did not know Him.

Now we come to the third grand attribute of John: and it is to this, my friends, that I would call your attention especially. *Tender* as the love of this man was for his Master, his Friend, mark how strongly and how manly it was, at the same time. He does not stand aside. He will allow no soldier, or guard, or executioner, to thrust him aside, or put him away from His Master. He stands by the Master's side, when He stood before His accusers in the Praetorium of Pilate. He comes out. John receives Him into his arms, when, fainting from loss of blood, He turns surrounded by soldiers from the terrific scene of His scourging; and when the Cross is laid upon the shoulders of the Redeemer, with the crowd of citizens around him, at His right hand, so close that he might lean upon him if He would, is the manly form of John the Evangelist. Oh, think of the love that was in his heart, and the depth of his sorrow, when he saw his Lord, his Master, his Friend, his only Love, reduced to so terrible a state of woe, of misery and of weakness! This was the condition of the Lord when they laid the heavy Cross

upon His shoulders. How the Apostle of love would have taken that painful and terrible crown, with its thorns, from the brow to which they adhered, and set the thorns upon his own head, if they had only been satisfied to let him bear the pains and the sufferings of his Master and his God! How anxious must he have been to take the load that was placed upon the unwilling shoulders of Simon of Cyrene! How he must have envied the man who lifted the Cross off the bleeding shoulders of the Divine Victim, and set it upon his own strong shoulders, and bore it alone up the steep side of Calvary! With what gratitude must the Apostle have looked upon the face of Veronica, who, with eyes streaming with tears, and on bended knees, upheld the cloth on which the Saviour imprinted the marks of His Divine Countenance! *Yet who* was this man who takes the place of shame? Who is this man who is willing to assume all the opprobrium and all the penalty that follows upon it? He is the only one of the twelve Apostles who is publicly known. We read in the Gospel that all the Apostles were poor men, taken out of the crowd by our Lord. The only one amongst them who had made some mark, who was noted, who was remembered for something or other, was John. And by whom was he known? He was known, says the Evangelist, to the High Priest. He was so well known to him, and to his guards, and to his officers, and to his fellow priests that when our Lord was in the house of Annas, John entered as a matter of course; and when Peter, with the rest was shut out, all that John had to do was to speak a word to the

doorkeeper and bring in Peter. He was well known to the chief magistrates — well known to the chief senators — well known to the men in power. “Oh, John! be prudent! Remember that you are a noted man, so that you will be set down by the men in power, for shame perhaps, or indignity, or even death, if you are seen with Jesus Christ in this hour. Consult your own interests. Do not be rash. There is no knowing what may happen to you.” Oh, this is the language of the world. This is the language which we hear day after day. “Prudence and Caution:” “No necessity to parade our religion!” “No necessity to be constantly unfurling the banner on which the Cross of Christ is depicted — the Cross on which He died to save the souls of men.” No necessity of all this. Let us go peacefully with the world! Let us worship in secret. Let us go on Sunday to Mass quietly; and let the world know nothing about it. Oh, how noble the answer of him whom all the world knew! How noble the soul of him who stood by the Lord when he knew that he was a marked man, and that sooner or later his fidelity on that Good Friday morning would bring him into trouble! Oh, glorious the man who knew that he was compromising himself! That he was placing his character, his liberty, his very life in jeopardy! That he was losing himself in the esteem of those worldly men who thought they were doing a wise, a proper, a prudent thing when they sent the Lord to be crucified! He stands by his Master. He says in the face of this whole world, “Whoever is His enemy, I am His friend. Whatever is His position to-day, I

am His creature; and I recognize Him as my God!" And so he trod, step by step, with the fainting Redeemer, up the rugged sides of Calvary. We know not what words of love and strong manly sympathy he may have poured into the afflicted ear of Christ. We know not how much the drooping Humanity of our Lord may have been strengthened and cheered in that sad hour by the presence of the faithful and loving John! Have you ever been in great affliction, my friends? Has sorrow ever come upon you with a crushing and an overwhelming weight? Have you ever lacked heart and power in great difficulty and seen no escape from the crushing weight of anxiety that was breaking your heart? Do you not know what it is to have even one friend — one friend on whom you can rely with perfect and implicit confidence — one friend who, you know, believes in you and loves you and whose love is as strong as life? One friend who, you know, will uphold you even if the world be against you? Such was the comfort, such the consolation that it was the Evangelist's privilege to pay to our Lord on Calvary. No human prudence or argument dissuaded him. He thought it — and he thought rightly, — the supreme wisdom to defy, to despise, and to trample upon the world, when that world was crucifying his Lord and Master. Highest type of man, saying from out of the depths of his own conscience, "I am above the world!" Let every *man* ask himself this night, and answer the question to his own soul: "Do I imitate the purity, do I imitate the love, do I imitate the courage or the bravery of this man, of whom it is

said that he was, "the disciple whom Jesus loved"! He got his reward. He got his reward exceedingly great. Oh, how little did he know, great as his love was, how little did he know of the crowning glory that was reserved to him at the foot of the Cross. How his heart must have throbbed within him with the liveliest emotions of delight, mingled in a stormy confusion with the greatness of his sorrow, when, from the lips of his dying Master, he received the command: "Son behold thy Mother!"—and with eyes dimmed with tears of anguish and of love did he cast his most pure, most loving, and most reverential glance upon the forlorn Mother of the dying Son! What was his ecstasy when he heard the voice of his dying Master say to Mary: "Mother look to John, my brother, my lover, my friend! Take him for thy son!" To John He said: "Son, I am going away, I am leaving this woman, my Mother, the most desolate of all creatures; but to you I leave her, take her for your Mother, my beloved disciple." John advanced one step—the type and prototype of the new man redeemed by our Lord—the man whose glory it was to be—that he was Mary's Son! He advances a step until he comes right in front of the Cross and approaches Mary, the Mother, in the midst of her sorrow, and flings himself into her arms. And the newly found son embraces his heavenly Mother, whilst from the crucified Lord the drops of blood fall down upon them and cement the union between His Church and His holy Mother, in which the mystery of the Incarnation is made per-

fect by completest adoption and brotherhood with the Son of God.

The scene of Calvary I will not touch upon or describe. The slowly passing minutes of pain, of anguish, and of agony that stretched out these terrible three hours of incessant suffering, of these I will not speak. But when the scene was over, when the Lord of Glory and of Love sent forth His last cry, when the terrified heart of the Virgin throbbed with alarm as she saw the centurion draw his terrible lance and thrust it through the side of her Divine Son; when all this was over and when our Lord was taken down from the Cross, and His body placed in Mary's arms after she had washed away the blood stains with her tears, after she had taken the crown of thorns from His brow, and when they laid Him in the tomb,—the desolate Mother put her hands into those of her newly found child, St. John, and with him returned to Jerusalem. The glorious title of "Child of Mary" was now his: and with this precious gift of the dying Redeemer he rejoiced in Mary's society, and in Mary's love. The Blessed Virgin was then, according to tradition, in her forty-ninth year. During the twelve years that she survived with John, she was mostly in Jerusalem, whilst he preached in Ephesus, one of the cities of Asia Minor, and founded there a church and held the chair as its first Apostle and Bishop. He founded a church at Philippi, and a church at Thessalonica, and many of the churches in Asia Minor. His whole life, for seventy years after the death of his Divine Lord, was

spent in the propagation of the Gospel and in the establishing of the Church. But for twelve years more the Virgin was with him, in his house, tenderly surrounding him with the comfort that care could supply. Oh, think of the raptures of his household! Every glance of her virginal eyes upon him reminded her of Him Who was gone, for John was like his Divine Master. It was that wonderful resemblance to Christ which the highest form of grace brings out on men. Picture to yourselves, if you can, that life at Ephesus when the Apostle, worn down by his Apostolic preaching, fatigued and wearied from his constantly proclaiming the victory and the love of the Redeemer, returned to the house and sat down, whilst Mary with her tender hand wiped the sweat from his brow, and these two, sitting together, spoke of the Lord and of the mysteries of the life in Nazareth; and from Mary's lips he heard the mysteries of the thirty years of love in the lowly house at Nazareth, and of how Joseph had died and Jesus had labored for her in his stead. From Mary's lips he heard the secrets, the wonderful secrets of her Divine Son, until filled with inspiration and rising to the grandest and most glorious heights of divinely inspired thought, he proclaimed the Gospel that begins with the wonderful words: "In the beginning was the Word,"—denoting and pointing back to the eternity of the Son of God. Picture to yourselves, if you can, how Mary poured out to John, years after the death of our Lord, her words of gratitude to him for the care with which he surrounded her,—and of all her gratitude to him for all that he had done in con-

soling and upholding her Divine Child in the hour of His sorrow! Oh, this surpasses all contemplation. Next to that mystery of divine love, the life in Nazareth with her own Child, comes the life which she lived in Ephesus with her second, her adopted son, St. John, the Evangelist. He passes to Heaven, first among the virgins, says St. Peter Damien, first in glory and first in love, enshrined to-day in the brightest light that surrounds the virgins' choirs of Heaven. Now, now he sings the songs of angelic joy and of angelic love; and he leaves to you and to me,—as he stands, and as we contemplate him upon the hill of Calvary—the grand and instructive lesson of how the Christian man is to behave towards his Lord and his God: living in Christian purity, in the Christ-given strength of divine love: which trampling under foot all mere human respect, lives and glories in the friendship of God and in the possession of His holy faith, and the practice of His holy religion—not blushing for Him before man; and thus gaining the reward of Him who says: "And he that confesses me before men, the same will I confess before my Father who is in heaven." Amen.

SERMON XXII

MARY MAGDALEN, THE TYPE OF THE PENITENT CHRISTIAN

“Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.”—LUKE 8, 36.

St. Jerome once wrote to his friend Heliodor the following: “When the ocean smiles on you like the rippling brook, like a peaceful lake; when its waters lie quietly before you and the wind only causes a slight wave, trust it not, for its very calmness is a sign of danger, and in its depths lurks an enemy. Therefore loosen the rudder, and reef the sails, this calm of the ocean harbors a storm.” The saint understands the ocean to stand for the world whose pride and lust have destroyed so many souls; whose malicious, deceitful, glittering appearance allures souls to destruction as the ocean with its rocks and storms destroys ships.

Mary Magdalen, whose contrition and penance will form the subject of our meditation to-day, has often been compared to a ship foundered upon a rock, but the rock was Christ. She went forth upon the treacherous and truculent waves of the world, inflated with pride and sensuality, and she plunged into the sea of vice. She was rich and abounded in all things. She possessed also the fatal gift of beauty, which has

been eternal death to tens of thousands. She was living in wealth, luxury and enjoyment, and, as the Apostle says, "was dead while she lived." She decked herself out in gold and fine apparel like the daughters of Jerusalem, of whom the prophet Isaias says, that they were haughty, and walked with their necks stretched out, with wanton glances in their eyes and making a noise with their feet, and walking with a mincing step, with the affectation of an immodest and luxurious life. She was known to be a sinner, and was notorious in the city. But her wealth, beauty and lascivious conduct chained hundreds of victims to her chariot wheels, and left on the waves of the world a long trail of scandal and bad example. Suddenly a storm arose, she foundered on a rock and suffered shipwreck. The storm was raised in her heart by Him, Who once with a word stilled the storm on the sea; the rock was He of Whom it was written: "the rock, however, was Christ!"

Magdalen had gone up to the Temple in all the bravery and ostentation of her apparel, not to worship the Holy One of Israel, but from curiosity, and to be seen and show herself to men. But she found herself in the presence of One Whose calm dignity abashed her. At first, it may be, she resisted the sound of His voice; but there was something in it which thrilled to the depths of the heart. There was something in that still, steady gaze of that Divine Eye which she could not escape. A shaft of light shot through her heart, and an illumination showed her to herself, even as God saw her, covered with sin as red as scarlet, and as

the leper as white as snow. She went her way with the wound deep in her heart, a wound which never could be healed save only by the hand that made it. Her soul racked with anguish, like a shattered vessel cast by the waves upon the beach, was borne in her tears to the feet of Jesus, her tears which were the tears of *sorrow*, and the tears of *love*.

This evening we shall with Magdalen direct our attention to the two sources of her tears; first the baseness of sin, in order that we may bewail our own sins with sincere sorrow; and *secondly*, the mercy and goodness of Jesus, in order that we may thank Him with tears of joy and love. May the holy penitent herself, who of all those who approached our Lord, is, according to the Gospel, the only one who did so for the salvation of her own soul, may she obtain for us the grace to know ourselves, to see ourselves even as God sees us!

The sun rose in the east in all his majestic splendor, after he had enpurpled in the aurora fields and meadows, mountains and valleys. He scattered his golden rays through millions of dewdrops, which trembled tear-like on grass and flower, transforming, as St. Francis so beautifully says, all nature into one vast field of tears, recalling the divine words: "Those who sow in tears will reap in joy!"

Magdalen lived in her palace at Magdala on the beautiful coast of the Galilean sea. The morning of her life was not brightened by rays of the Divine Son. She had grown up amidst the laurel and olive trees that surrounded her palace, like a luxurious and

luscious flower, blooming and living only for sensual pleasure. Twelve long years she was sunk in the foul embrace of her own passions. But the Setting Sun, the Lord, as the close of His public life drew near and the evening of His Passion approached, gazed upon her, and her heart was cut asunder by this shaft of light, by this gracious look, and she sank at His feet and bedewed them again and again with her tears.

She wept; do you know why, my friends? — Because she realized how much her sins had damaged her own soul! The knowledge of her sins was the rod of Moses which brought forth the spring of tears from her hardened heart.

But let us hear the trembling words of Magdalen's contrition and see whether they do not find an echo in our own hearts, in our own conscience:

“O Jesus, thou hast granted that I should be born of a good family, surrounded with luxury and every comfort; Thou hast given me the example of a virtuous devoted brother and sister; Thou hast given me perfect health, wondrous beauty of form and all earthly accomplishments; Thou hast called me into existence at the very time when Thou dost walk the earth among men; Thy voice has sounded around about me the words of eternal life; before my eyes Thou hast performed miracles of divine love and almighty power; Thou hast borne with me to this very hour so graciously, so lovingly, so patiently, so passionately — and I — and I — and I — what have I done? Alas! I have allowed the seven devils of unclean spirits to enter into my heart; I glutted my mind

with shameful lust, and worldly vanity, whilst Thy Countenance is so pure that even angels rejoice to behold it. I had on my tongue and on my lips the foul, poisonous slime of lust while Thy sacred lips uttered the words of eternal life. My lustful eye carried death to my own soul and to souls of so many others, whilst Thy eye watched over those who feared Thee; my feet went in the ways of evil, yes, as the prophet says: 'The devil went before me,' and I followed in his train, whilst of Thee it is said: 'He went through the cities and market places announcing peace, and bringing the good tidings of salvation.' My hands were stretched out in malice and injustice — whilst Thy hands were folded to bless, to heal, to pray — in one word, I committed sin upon sin, without shame, without sorrow; I accustomed myself to sin, I rejoiced and revelled in them; I smiled with compassion on the virtuous; but kept away from them because their life was a constant reproach to me; I steeped myself in sensuality and stifled the voice of my conscience in the intoxicating lust of the world; *my heart* was a living sin, whose every pulsation offended Thee and compelled Thee to utter the sad reproach: 'My people, what have I done to you and how have I offended you, that you grieve Me so much and injure your own soul so much!' "

But how does sin harm the soul? — "Yes," exclaims Magdalen to her own soul, and the souls of others, "I acknowledge, realize, that I caused the fall of many by my lustful countenance, my shameless conduct, and seductive airs; I realize but too well that in

seeking to ensnare others with the golden profusion of my waving hair, I entangled my own soul in the meshes of sin; that with my luxurious and vain apparel, with my Arabian spices, I but spread the stench of sin, the foul air of scandal about me, and sunk myself deeper and deeper into vice, bringing many others with me.

“But I will now rise from sin, and go to my God, to God who giveth joy to youth. I will weep tears of sorrow, bitter tears over my past sins, I will cast myself at the feet of Jesus and wash them with my tears.” Let us follow her example; we too have sinned, and many most grievously. But let your tears be effectual and fruitful as were the tears of Magdalen. We will then endeavor to make satisfaction to our offended God, as Magdalen, our sublime prototype, did.

It is a peculiarity of sincere love to endeavor in every way to make the loved one forget every and even the smallest pain or offense by an excess of love and devotion. Magdalen, as soon as the divine ray of grace pierced her soul, and she recognized the baseness of sin, what did she not do to make satisfaction for her sin, and to appease the offended Saviour! She humbled herself, she wept over her sins, she kissed her Saviour's feet, and anointed them.

The gaze that had been fixed upon her and the sound of that voice were still in her memory. She could escape them nowhere. No doubt there was a conflict going on day after day since she had been in the Temple, and her old companions in sin, her

evil friends and the manifold dangers of life came thick about her as before; but she had no soul for them. At last laying aside her finery and ostentation, unclasping the jewels from her head, and with her hair all loose about her, with an alabaster box of ointment, she walked through the streets of Jerusalem caring for no one, thinking of no one but God and of her own sins. She was not like Nicodemus, she did not seek Jesus at night or when He was alone. No, hearing that Jesus of Nazareth sat at meat in the house of Simon the Pharisee, she broke into the midst of the banquet, under the scornful, piercing, indignant eyes that glared upon her; without shame, because her only shame was before the eye of God; without fear, knowing what she was, because she had come to know of the love and tenderness of Him Who had spoken to her. She stood silent behind Him weeping. She had the courage even to kiss His feet, to wash them with her tears, to wipe them with the hair of her head; while the Pharisee secretly rebuked Our Divine Lord, and asked himself in heart: "If this man had been a prophet, would He not know what manner of a woman this is? She is a sinner, and He would not have allowed her to touch His feet." But those feet had in them the healing of sin. The touch of those feet, powerful as the touch upon the hem of His garment, cleansed that poor sinner. He turned and in the hearing of them all, and said: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." Here is an example of the grace of penance only; yet a perfect and full absolution given in a moment; more than

this, of a complete restoration of purity given to the most fallen. In token of that absolution, and of that restoration, privileges were granted to Mary Magdalen beyond others. She, out of whom Jesus cast seven devils, was the one who stood at the foot of the Cross with the Immaculate Mother of God. It was she who kissed His feet at that supper, who afterwards anointed them, and wound them in the fine linen for His burial. It was she the greatest of sinners, who, next after His Immaculate Mother, saw Him before all others when He arose from the dead; and these tokens of the love of Jesus to penitents, and to the greatest of penitents, have been followed in the kingdom of Heaven with the glory proportioned to her sorrow and her love. Mary Magdalen is set forth forever as an example of grace and penitence, and of the perfect absolution of the Most Precious Blood.

We, too, my beloved Christians, should like Magdalen make amends for our sins, and in such a manner that the whole world should know that our contrition, our sorrow was indeed a reality. We should tarry at the feet of the Saviour, and hear His divine words, warmly embrace His divine administrations and faithfully follow them in practical life. To be silent and speak not; for perfect love and true sorrow have few words, but the heart will speak. We should weep bitter tears over our sins, and if our eyes are dry and the spring of our tears ceases to flow, then speak to Jesus, Who wept over Jerusalem, and say with St. Louis: "O sweetest Jesus, give me the gift of Thy bitter tears!" The Crucifix, which should be by the

bed of every Christian, contritely kiss every morning and evening as a penance for the sins of your lips and the malice of your tongue. Christ and all His members do Christians anoint with the sweet odor of virtue.

We must do penance for our own soul's sake and for the souls of those whom we have injured by our sins. There is a threefold penance, that of duty, that of choice, and that sent by God. The sins that we repent of, we must absolutely never commit, even if they have, so to say, become a part of ourselves; we must avoid and eschew them as a sacred duty, if we wish to be saved. This is a hard and difficult penance. The second method of doing penance consists in free sacrifice in order to strengthen in us the spirit of Penance; to-day it is the denial of a lawful pleasure; to-morrow the abstaining from food or drink, or patience in dealing with unbearable and testy persons, and then refraining from agreeable company, the dispensing of alms, the acceptance of any trouble. These penances harden and prepare and strengthen us for the third method of penance if it please God to send it to us. And this He does at times in the form of the cross of poverty and need, of sickness and pain, ingratitude and persecution, bad children, a faithless man, an adulterous wife, and all the other evils that go to make our way through life, the way of the Cross. St. Mary Magdalen practiced most heroically this threefold penance, and became a sublime example to all during the thirty years which she spent on the celebrated mount near Marseilles. In regard to her penance it is said

that once a bee flew into her cell and she chased it away, whereupon the bee said, "I will not sting you; I only wish to bring you honey." "I knew it well," she said; "but I don't want anything sweet in this world, I want only what is sad and bitter."

My Christians, we are far removed from this sublime example, and we feel as though we should hang our heads in veriest shame; especially when we hear the words of another heroine of penance, viz., St. Theresa. She says: "If pure earthly love takes pleasure in making sacrifices for the sake of the loved one, who is offended — should we stand back, should we be ashamed to perform the greatest penance, to bring the most difficult sacrifice of love, whose object is God, Whom we have offended by sin? — No, let our tears of sorrow flow, in order that later they may be changed into tears of love."

St. Augustine commenting on these words of Scripture: "Strong as death is love," says: "The power of love could not be better expressed than in these few words. For what can resist death? One can resist fire, one can escape from the power of water, the elements are not unconquerable, and even the great ones of the world are often subjugated and rulers and princes have their opponents, but when grim death comes, who can overcome it? For this reason love is compared to the power of death, which is just as powerful, and in this respect like to death because it kills what we were before, in order that we may become what we have not been; love works in us, as it were a spiritual death. Magdalen proves this to us;

the pure love of God destroyed in her for all time all that she had been, even the name of a sinner which she bore before, and washed away her sins. "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much!"

Her contrition was the contrition of love, perfect contrition, the love of God; she was sorry for her sins not because she had lost by them her honor and good name, or any other temporal loss; her sorrow was not caused by the fear of Hell, her sorrow was therefore not a natural, not an imperfect, but a supernatural, a perfect sorrow, because the reason was Jesus; because the source of her tears is the merciful God, and therefore they were the tears of love — which are the most precious, the most meritorious, the most powerful, of which St. Laurence says: "Tears of love, thine is the power and glory!" "Thy sins are recorded in the book of life, weep," calls St. Chrysostom, "and thy sins shall be blotted out; let your tears flow and nothing will remain; this, to wipe away the record of a sinful life, this is the power of the tears of love."

Magdalen's tears of love were called forth chiefly by her gratitude towards Jesus. The Saviour received her without any reproach, without any unkind word, He even took her under His protection and defended her. He allowed her with His other disciples, and set her affectionately at His feet. He spoke to her alone the words of divine love: "Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath helped thee, go in peace." After His Resurrection He appeared to her and called her by name; He commended her to His Mother, who nourished the tender flower of penance. And Magdalen,

should she not by the very thought of so much kindness be grateful — and should not her gratitude move her even to tears? Gratitude has also its tears, but they are sweet, not bitter like the memory of past sins.

My friends, recall to your minds a poor family, wretchedly poor, through no fault of theirs, who are ashamed to beg, and must suffer misery and want that would move a stone to pity. The wretched house is as cold as an ice house, the pantry is empty, the children are scantily clad and are crying for bread, but the poor mother has not even a crust to give them. The father sits in the corner in despair biting his lips with anguish and misery which threatens to rob him of all faith in God and man. The mother lifts her head in misery to the Crucifix — it is a heart-rending scene — when lo — there is a rap — and a man enters; the diamond ring on his finger marks him of noble birth, but his nobility of heart is more brilliant; he places a well filled purse on the table and says: “Be happy,” and tries to leave at once, but cannot, for the children shouting with joy embrace his knees, the poor mother overcome with tears kisses gratefully his hand, the father in whose heart faith and confidence in God have returned, stands speechless until a flood of tears unloosens his tongue to a “May God reward you,” whose tone penetrates the heart of the benefactor with a blessedness which is a foretaste of the joys of Heaven. Behold my friends, the tears of gratitude.

O poor wretched sinner, poorer and more wretched than this poor family, because your heart was frozen

by sin, and your soul weak with the weakness of death. When you broke the bread of life, did not your Saviour come and enrich you with His love, and did He not say to you in the sacrament of Penance: "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace?" Did He not appear to you in Holy Communion, did He not bear you up in His hands, did He not grant you graces without number, benefits without end and marks of His love immeasurable? And should not the memory of all this make you grateful, and gratitude move you even unto tears when you kneel before your Crucifix and behold your Saviour wounded by your sins?

After the death of Christ, the persecution of the Jews broke out and Mary with John and Magdalen fled to Greece. In this place of banishment Mary and Magdalen often sat under a palm tree on the coast of the beautiful Ionian sea and longingly watched a Grecian galley whose keel was directed towards Syria, and thought of their own land of Judea. They reminded one another of the pure snow crowned Lebanon, of the purple heights of Carmel, of the fresh waters of the Tiberian sea, and wandered in spirit through their fatherland, beautified by absence, appearing to them more glorious than the rich, the joyful Ionian, the place of their banishment. But through this longing for home penetrated their aspiration for their heavenly home, for Jesus, which grew especially in the heart of Magdalen in the same degree as God had gradually freed her from all earthly ties. Jesus was dead. Mary died. John withdrew himself. Magdalen herself left her relatives and fled into soli-

tude, and the more alone she was, the more earnestly did she desire to be dissolved and be with Christ and His blessed Mother, and longing for this, her aspiration for Heaven often moved her into tears, for eager longing has its tears too.

Whoever has been in Rome during Holy Week will remember the sweet tones of the Miserere as chanted in the Sistine Chapel. At every stanza a light is extinguished. The hymn goes sadly on, and becomes more sad the darker it gets. When every light has disappeared, and it is hardly possible to see anything in the dark, a voice slowly starts to sing. All alone it relates in soul-stirring, penetrating tones the awful power of a commanding God over life and death. So it is in human life. The extinguished lights are the illusions which fall away, beloved objects which gradually disappear, worldly joys, which gradually cease—happy is the one who by a good sincere confession, by the constant preservation of a pure conscience, is placed in a position to hear the soothing tones of a voice in the dark, the voice of confident hope in Heaven, in Jesus.

My beloved Christians, Almighty God has stricken off the chains of slavery, has freed you more or less from things of earth. He has given you a loving heart, a mind bright with the brightness of faith, He has indeed robbed you of sensual joys, allowed your hopes often to go unfulfilled. Hours may come to you when you feel abandoned and a stranger in the world, when the world with its pleasures and deceits maddens you, when you feel entirely alone; then rises

in the heart a flame which gradually becomes a glowing fire, a glowing, a longing desire for Heaven, for Jesus, that urges you on irresistibly, so that like Magdalen you weep tears of longing. Oh, let those tears flow, they are like unto tears of gratitude, of love, and forget not that your tears only make for your salvation, when you have first wept tears of sorrow, of bitterest sorrow for the sins of your past life. Amen.

SERMON XXIII

THE CATHOLIC YOUNG LADY

“Oh how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory; for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with man.”—Wis. 4, 1.

The Christian Family which is the source of human life may rightly be compared to a tree which Almighty God Himself planted in the ground. The tree which rises slender and powerful in all the fullness of its life towards heaven, rests on a deep and strong root, which by an invisible network perforates the ground and draws nourishment from its bosom. From the roots comes forth the trunk which conducts along thousands of arteries the sap to the summit and to the last leaf of the tree. From the trunk of the tree the branches develop which through the wealth of their foliage and flowers give a beautiful and beneficent appearance.

Every Christian family should be such a tree planted by God with His own hands in His own garden. The root of this tree is the Christian father of the home; he is the support, the foundation, who is destined to prepare and furnish the nutriment of the family. The trunk of the tree from which burst forth the branches and which conceals within itself the sap of life is the mother of the family. The chil-

dren form the branches, together with their buds, flowers and fruits, which for the greater honor of God, and as a blessing to the world, are to come forth from the bosom of the Christian family.

Last Sunday we meditated upon the duties and responsibilities and the honors of true Christian womanhood and motherhood. This evening I wish to devote to the young ladies, and this shall be the last of this series of Lenten discourses.

In the first place, what are the virtues that must characterize the Christian young lady? I need hardly tell you, for your own hearts at once suggest what we all expect in a young lady.

Your very name, my Christian young woman, discloses to you and teaches you the task and the duties of your present state of life. Virginal purity and chastity is the ornament and crown of your age. This precious gem you must bring pure and spotless to the altar of God and place it there unprofaned before the throne of God in the hour of death. Chastity is the crystal in which the light of heaven separates in all its beauteous purity, and breaks at the same time into the most translucently beautiful rays and colors. The perfection of your state of life and age consists in the preservation of this diamond from every stain of sin.—A young woman who has lived pure and chaste has fulfilled all her duties; because all the virtues which should adorn her heart, will either be the fruits of chastity, or will be loved and practiced by her as guardians and defenders of chastity.

On this account I shall endeavor to explain the high

value of this bright diamond of a pure and chaste heart which is the crowning glory of maidenhood.

In the first place then what is chastity, and wherein consists its value and greatness? And, secondly, what are the virtues by which chastity is preserved in the heart of a young woman?

We will ask the Virgin Mother of Our Divine Saviour to teach us the beauty of this virtue.

Many virtues bloom as flowers of diverse colors and emit a fragrance in the garden of God and can be practised by us. The one surpasses the other in excellence and distinction. But the queen of all virtues is virginal chastity or virginal purity. Purity is a virtue full of glory, a virtue full of privileges, and blessed with happiness and tenderness. Let us meditate upon all these points in particular.

Listen to the commentary of the Holy Ghost on this most beautiful and most glorious of virtues. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory; for the memory thereof is immortal; because it is known both with God and with man," says the Book of Wisdom. "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God," says Our Saviour Jesus Christ. "Now concerning Virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord — but I give counsel as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful," says St. Paul. "I think that this is good for the present necessity; that it is good for a man so to be. . . . Therefore both he that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well, and he that giveth her not doth better. . . . But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain. . . . All men, take not this word,

but they to whom it is given. . . . He that can take it let him take it."

And the words of the saints are similarly full of praise for this virtue. The saintly martyr Ignatius writes concerning chastity in his letter to the people at Tarsus: "Such as live a life of chastity—(virginity) you should honor as the priests of Christ." "They are more, especially the children of Christ," says St. Ambrose. St. Chrysostom calls them the angels of God on earth. St. Bernard raises them above the angels. A chaste man and an angel differ in this, he says: that chastity is good fortune in the angel, but a virtue in man. "Rejoice ye virgins betrothed to God," St. Augustine cries out to them; "what an honor and good fortune, for you have Him for your bridegroom Whom the purest Queen of virgins was alone worthy to love as a Son! He honors you not indeed as His Mother, but he loves you as His brides."

But why all this honor in the mouth of God and his saints? Only view chastity in its innermost being, and it will soon become apparent to you! Chastity is the perfection of all virtue and holiness, it is the very acme of a Christian life, in its most translucent form. As the greatest of virtues over oneself and over the wildest of all impulses, it is the crown of all virtues, and Christian holiness as far as may be obtained on earth. Chastity changes us from men into angels in the flesh, as Our Saviour says: "For in the resurrection they shall neither marry, nor be married; but shall be as the angels of God, in heaven."

To the Christian maiden there can be no virtue and no perfection without chastity. In it alone consists your being, as the name you bear indicates. In it lies your whole value, your whole worth, your glory, as the name implies which you bear. Without chastity you are a body from which the soul has escaped, and which must corrupt as a body not vivified by the soul. Without purity you are a temple from which the Holy of Holies has been torn away. Without chastity you are as the tabernacle from which the Blessed Sacrament has been stolen with criminal hands; you are a living lie and sin.

Christianity, the pure dove of Heaven, had hardly flown upon earth and set its feet upon this poor sin-worn world when hundreds and thousands of Christians strove to exercise this preeminent and excellent virtue. Animated by the praise which the Saviour of the world bestowed upon this grandest of human virtues and taught by the example of His own life and His blessed Mother, numberless souls choose the virgin life as all do who draw near to Christ. The graces of Christianity were the seeds out of which grew this virtue, almost superhuman in the eyes of the world before Christ.

If I now pass over to the prerogatives of this virtue, let me first recall to your minds how the same was honored even among the pagans. Heathenism had lost the ethical or moral power to exercise this virtue, but the esteem for holy purity never disappeared even in this terrible corruption; and although the debauchee cannot suffer the sight of a chaste vir-

gin, and as the loss of virginity in a lawful way appears to natural man to be a giving up and renunciation of a perfection; be it that heathenism admiring the strength of the man, who celebrated the greatest victory by the conquest of his lower nature, or be it that the hope of all people, that a virgin should bear the Mediator before God and men impelled them to honor every maiden — we have the strange fact that perfect chastity had certain privileges and prerogatives all over the world.

Almost all nations of antiquity had their vestal virgins whom they regarded as higher beings. The senator had to rise in pagan Rome before a priestess of Vesta and uncover his head. In case a vestal virgin met a criminal who was on the way to execution, he had to be pardoned at once. Holy virgins guarded the temple of Minerva in Athens, whilst in Rome they took care of the sacred fire. Such priestesses consecrated to perpetual virginity we find in India and Peru, as also in China and Japan; and it is peculiar how the violation of their vow was followed almost everywhere with the same punishment as at Rome.

But by far higher are the privileges and prerogatives which the Church and Jesus Christ accords to the virgin maiden. From the first centuries of the Church we find virgins consecrated to God. They wore special clothes blessed by the Bishop and belonged in a certain sense to the clergy of the Church. During diverse services they were nearer to the altar and they enjoyed precedence over all the other women. Special liturgical prayers were offered up for them.

Our Divine Saviour has accorded to virginal souls the greatest privileges. He calls them blessed and says of them that they shall see His face. St. John has this to say about them in his Apocolypse: "And they sung as it were a new canticle before the throne and before the four living creatures and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those one hundred forty-four thousand—who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And within their mouth was found no lie for they are without spot before the throne of God." "And whither does the Lamb go?" Adds St. Augustine. "He goeth where one tastes unspeakable joys, the enjoyment of which is peculiar to virgins and will be different from the joys of other saints who were not virgins."

Virginal souls were deemed worthy to come nearer to Our Lord than others even in the days of His earthly career. His Mother was a virgin, His foster-father was a virgin. The Apostle St. John, who by a special proference of love was permitted to rest on the heart of Jesus, was a pure virgin boy. A chaste and virgin priesthood alone is worthy to carry the Body of Our Lord in its hands. Virginal souls alone will enjoy in Heaven the most intimate union with the Lamb.

Every virtue brings joy and happiness to man—because virtue is the reward of a struggle and a vic-

tory, and victory begets joy in the heart of him who wins it. The greater and the more uninterrupted the struggle which it costs to acquire a virtue, the greater will be the joy because of the victory. He who preserves the chastity of his heart untarnished in the victory over the world and over his sinful heart, will carry in his heart unimpaired the peace of God which accompanies purity, and which is the reward of it. Like the sun this virtue will shine upon the soul, and every fog of sin and the most gentle discord of the heart will remain at a distance.

Christian women, so long as you remain free from this stain, no great sorrow and grief will torment you. No vice will be able to grow up in your heart. Small imperfections will indeed tarnish the beauty of your soul but mortal sin will not stain it. Nothing will be able to rob you of your happiness. Every new victory will render the peace of your heart more secure. But if the vice of unchastity, reigns in your soul — then your happiness will vanish forever. Then all the portals of evil are open; the mire of sin wallows in your heart and the most terrible struggles must then be encountered. Unchastity is followed by all kinds of vices and by consequent corruption and ruin.

Virginal chastity renders you amiable, joyous, happy. It is your glory and the true and only beauty of your being. It is the rouge which God has given you Himself and which no artificial means can counterfeit or explain. It is the guardian of all tenderness and true love. Vice and luxury make men cruel, hard and bitter. Chastity on the contrary begets

mildness and meekness. This virtue saves you from lies and falsehood. A pure heart is as clear and transparent as water. A pure maiden has nothing to conceal or fear before others. There is nothing in her chaste heart that would make her blush to have others see. Purity loves truth and is open-hearted towards parents, brothers, sisters and towards every one who approaches her. All is light and clear in her. Her thoughts and desires, her memory and imagination, her whole being is so pure, that neither she nor her surroundings could suggest any vice or uncleanness. *Chastity* is the pure temple of God from which everything unholy is banished. Purity is the transfiguration of your being, and the wreath of virtue which she winds around your head will increase the blessedness of your heart.

What shall I say of the bliss of Heaven which chastity procures for you? "But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain," says St. Paul, meaning a virgin. And Our Saviour promises those who are of a clean heart—the vision of His Countenance. Whoever follows Him shall upon His return sit on the same throne with Him. And every one that hath left home or brother or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife or children or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting." Whoever renounces the lust of the flesh—in which, as Holy Scripture says—all is lust—and preserves chastity amidst continual warfare shall receive the highest reward in Heaven. Whoever gains the greatest victory, shall also wear the most beauti-

ful crown. If the soul that observes conjugal purity receives a reward of thirtyfold, if a widow that lives up to her state in stainless purity after the husband's death, receives sixtyfold reward, a virgin must receive a reward of an hundredfold.

Will you not then do all in your power to preserve this glorious, this excellent and blessed virtue? You are bound to do it; for it is also a virtue of tenderness. Chastity is easily violated and lost. What Our Lord says of the grace of faith in our heart is also true of chastity. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be in the power of God and not in us." An unchaste wind blows over the earth and seems to affect our whole modern society. Our fashions are often full of boldness; also our theatres, our literature and paintings, which our days bring forth and multiply so terribly. Full of lewdness and shamelessness is our public life. The cry for pleasure fills our cities, and wherever it is heard, it is sure to call out the vipers of unchastity which spread like wildfire.

With the dangers about us, come the weakness of our own hearts and the desires of the lower man. The inclination to sin has its roots even in the purest souls, and the germs of vice are ever in the hearts of our fallen nature. The first motions of the natural passions are not sins, but they lead to sin, and their power is often stronger than would appear to us — if we are not on the alert from the very beginning. We all can say with Holy Writ: "My strength is not the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass."

Should we not with fear look upon the treasure of chastity in the earthen and sinful vessel of our heart, when we remember how the Devil goes about like a thief, like a serpent, like a roaring lion to rob us of this precious gift! Satan hungers for pure souls. He is the unclean spirit, and he hates with an unquenchable hatred every clean and pure heart. He is the sworn enemy of Jesus Christ, and persecutes on that account every chaste and virginal heart, who are special friends and favorites of the Saviour.

And how easy this virtue can be wounded. Christian young women, don't think of this vice. Even a mere thought stains a pure soul, as the gentlest breath darkens the crystal. The most distant representation of this sin, stains the temple of the chaste heart, as the least dust lessens the lustre of gold. One single word is a coarse discord that disturbs the peace of the soul. Whoever is not faithful in little things, will not be faithful in important things. Whoever does not avoid the smallest, in a short time will not avoid the greatest dangers to the virtue of chastity.

Almighty God gave to every flower an ornament and a protection for the bud within its leaves. The most noble and delicate organs of the human body are especially guarded from wounds by shields of nature. The eye for instance is a proof of what I say. Just in the same way, the virtues protect one another — the more delicate and heavenly the virtue, the more it will be protected by others. The virtues are the pearls, ornamenting, beautifying, giving a setting to the jewel or diamond.

Now what are the virtues, that give the setting, the encasement as it were, to the most precious of all pearls, Virginity — and protect and beautify it?

First humility and modesty. Humility is a precious vase which encloses all virtues and guards them from corruption. Humility is the good soil in which they feed and grow. Humility obtains from Heaven God's grace, guarantees us God's help and assistance, and without God's grace we can do nothing. All virgins were humble, from the humble Virgin Mother of Christ, and Queen of virgins — to the last of her devoted followers. Virginity brings forth humility and humility preserves, enhances and elevates the purity of heart. The haughty maiden will soon cease to be a maiden at least in heart. All those who weep bitter tears over the sins of their youth were led step by step to fall by pride. First they flattered their vanity and tried to please men, soon they bent every effort to encompass the utter ruin of others and reap approval and praise. Like a newly rigged vessel they plowed the waves of life in order to conquer; the storm arose, rent the sails and crushed the proud vessel, and stranded it a pitiful wreck upon the rocks. *Pride* precedes the fall, and shame follows it everywhere.

The humble maiden is modest and unpretentious in her conduct and behavior. She seeks her worth and beauty not in the accidents of exterior appearance but in the noble qualities of mind and heart. She boasts not in thought or conversation, but will always aim to preserve through humility God's good pleasure. Mindful of her human weakness and sinfulness she

looks up to God always, and expects from above every help and strength, in every trial. To Him she commits the care of the future.

It is a morbid sign of the times, which we deplore in so many parents, that it seems as if they could not send their children too soon into the world and its pleasures and passions. I think that Almighty God granted to man His best care at his birth, by endowing him with manifold powers of body and soul. Never did I see the just abandoned. Not every one is destined for holy wedlock, just as every fruit is not sown again. It is not impossible nor unreasonable to go through life in single blessedness. The mania of some parents to have their children provided for, sows seeds of dissipation in the hearts of their daughters who soon lose that candor, joyousness, proper to their age. This strikes at the root of humility in the soul, and is the usual road to a life of sin.

In the heart of the maiden modesty goes hand in hand with humility. What faith is to the priest, activity to the man, tenderness to the mother, earnestness to the aged, obedience to the child, courage to the soldier, knowledge to the learned, modesty is to the young lady — a virtue without which she cannot exist. The nature of modesty can more easily be perceived than described. It is that refined gentleness and politeness which is by nature peculiar to woman in a high degree. Modesty is that virtue which enables the young woman to measure aright all her words and thoughts, all her ways and the bearings of her person. The modest young lady will never pronounce an un-

becoming word, or permit such in her presence. The most gentle, yet unbecoming will cause a blush to mantle her cheek. She will avoid every danger and by some peculiar instinct she knows when danger is approaching.

This gentle modesty is the protection of every virtuous woman. Modesty protects the purity of her heart, as the eyelids protect the pupils of our eyes. It is the rampart built by God around the chastity of the soul. And when this rampart is torn asunder, then the way is open to ruin. An immodest young woman is on that account despised by all the world. With all other accomplishments, she is a corpse adorned with costly wares—an ugly, an offensive sight. This virtue should be esteemed by you in the highest degree. This virtue must be cultivated and become still more refined, in order that the purity of the soul veiled by it may not suffer any loss.

Besides humility and modesty the pearl of chastity must be surrounded for her own honor and protection, by watchfulness, in union with Christian fortitude.

I have already spoken of the dangers to the chastity of the soul. They arise from within, from our own weakness, and they come from without, and it is hard to say which is the most subtle and dangerous. Only a fearful vigilance will overcome them, inasmuch as she is always exposed to them: "Watch and pray," Our Lord tells us, "lest you fall into temptation; for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." "The Devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." David, the holy king of Israel, fell

into sin. Are we more holy than he? Solomon, who was once loved by God, who was divinely called to build the temple of the Most Holy, fell. Are we more perfect than he? Thousands have fallen, though they thought a fall impossible. Are we greater and stronger than they? Listen to what St. Paul, mistrusting his own strength, says: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest that when I have preached to others, I myself may become a castaway." The greater the treasure to be guarded, the greater must be the care taken to protect it.

Be watchful over yourselves; over what originates in your heart, or enters it through the wide portals of the same. Alas, the germs of our passions grow unconsciously in our sinful souls. Beware of all inquisitiveness to know things that should remain hidden to you. Be watchful over the senses of the body, in particular over your eyes and ears, so that sin shall not enter like a spark of fire into the easily enkindled depths of your soul and ruin it. St. Chrysostom compares an unchaste look to an arrow which pierces an animal's flesh. A deer, he says, that is not mortally wounded will still run about in the face of his foes, until finally from loss of blood he falls dead. "O Lord, turn Thou my eyes away that I see not the vanities of the world," prayed David. An unchaste look tempted and caused David to sin.

Be careful whom you choose for friends. Instead of angels you will meet men who are like the serpent that caused the fall of our first parents, that caused them to disobey God's commandment. Many who call

themselves your friends and who wish to have your future placed in their hands, carry honey on their tongues, but poison in their hearts. They play in a shameful way with the fortune of your life; they play in the passion of their hearts with your immortal soul. Be watchful over your reading and conversation. The cheap literature of to-day with few exceptions is bad. The novels especially are like the serpent's shining scales, for they present what is worst in human nature and human passion, in pleasant words and attractive form to the young soul. It speaks to the youth as of old: "No you shall not die the death. For God doth know in whatsoever day you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." It awakens impulses in your souls that should be at rest, and awakens even compassion and enthusiasm for vice in your souls.

But vigilance really in earnest, must be invested with fortitude; for fortitude is the perfection of vigilance. All pure and chaste souls were brave, because they knew the temptations and the weakness of the human heart. They knew that flight in this case is courageous, and that the greatest exertion is necessary to preserve the golden treasure of purity in the weak vessel of clay. Have you not heard how St. Agatha and St. Agnes suffered martyrdom sooner than permit their chastity to be violated? Have you not heard how St. Benedict, tempted to unchastity, rolled his body in a heap of thorns and briars? Have you not heard that St. Bernard, in the strength of his heart, leaped into a frozen pond? You have heard of saints

who have disfigured their faces so as not to be too much exposed to the blandishments of the world. Their penitential girdles and garments, the bloody scourge with which they chastised their bodies — the vows which they made, were so many acts of fortitude to overcome the weakness of the human heart.

But without the grace and assistance of God, all our good resolutions to imitate the saints would fall to the ground. On this account the purity of the heart must be made invincible and inviolable by prayer and the sacraments.

The young lady must cultivate the spirit of prayer. Women have by nature a larger fund of piety. It is their particular inheritance and ornament. In His wisdom God has willed it so, not only because woman destined to be mothers must plant the seeds of religion and piety in the hearts of her children, but also because she cannot overcome the dangers of life without true piety. The Christian woman says, in the words of Holy Scripture: "And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was: I went to the Lord, and besought Him with my whole heart."

"With expectation I have waited for the Lord and He was attentive to me. And He heard my prayers and brought me out of the pit of misery and the mire of dregs. And He set my feet upon a rock and directed my steps." *Every* morning the Christian woman will look upon the Cross and its splendor of rays and will honor the Mother of God. The Queen

of virgins will hold her strong and powerful hand over every soul that is prepared to walk in her footsteps.

But the most abundant grace and the greatest help in her struggle for virtue, the Christian woman will draw from the frequent reception of the sacraments. Frequent confession will retain in her heart a tender dislike for the smallest sin, and ever increase her former conscientiousness. Confession will remove the slightest wrong from her soul so as not to become a dangerous leaven. Nourished and strengthened by the Body and Blood of Our Lord, she will be able to overcome every obstacle to her chastity. The virginal flesh of the Saviour and His Sacred Blood will as the prophet of old has said, "bring forth virgins," repel all unchaste desires, will quench the fire of lust, and elicit only what is pure and chaste. *Every* Christian maiden who is before God what she ought to be — no thoughtless child of the world — not a lady of the world — but a woman pure and chaste, consecrated to her heavenly queen — should receive on all feasts of the Blessed Virgin the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. This is the most beautiful occupation for your age and the best preparation for after life, whether God destines you to enter holy wedlock or to blossom a lily before God in perfect chastity.

My dear good maidens, you must be trained and educated to virtue. The vocation of man calls him from home. The cultivation of science, and activity in public life is the duty and calling of man. To adorn your house with virtue, with favors, mercy, devotion, devotedness, kindness and tenderness — this

is your duty and destiny. In this you possess excellent mastery. For this purpose you are created, and from your earliest days you must practise and perfect yourselves in these occupations. Be pure and chaste young women, and you are living temples of God; then you will be best prepared for the station in life to which God may call you. Amen.

SERMON XXIV

THE CATHOLIC YOUNG MAN

“Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say: They please me not.”—ECCLES. 12, 1.

The time of youth is the most beautiful period of human life. It is the sunlit springtime of life, when nature seems to rejoice in its vigorous growth.

How beautiful is all nature in spring! It lies spread out before our eyes in all its grandeur and beauty! The whole earth seems to be covered with a carpet of wondrous beauty and variegated colors. Everything seems to be endowed with new and vigorous life, and begins to grow, and bud and blossom. Even the birds of the air sing with new life and joy the praises of the Most High. Surrounded by silvery clouds, the sun makes his way across the skies, and the higher he rises, the more abundant is vegetable life which his rays call forth. It would seem as if God were looking down with pleasure upon this world as He did on the sixth day after He had created it. It would almost seem as if He were passing silently and unobserved over His creation in order to receive homage from the works of His hands.

Is not the springtime of life, the age of youth, just as glorious and beautiful? What wondrous growth

there is in the soul of the child about to develop into the young man or maiden. What a mysterious and vigorous life begins to develop in those years! Who does not rejoice over the years of his youth? Who among the aged does not love to recall the years when his blood flowed vigorous and warm through his veins — and when the cares, and toils and trials of life were still unknown to him. Who would not wish to live over again the days of his youth, when his eyes undimmed by passion, could look up to Heaven in innocence and joy? To preserve one's youthfulness, and to enjoy in old age the strength of youth unimpaired, is the glory and pride of man.

But the time of youth is a most decisive, and for this reason, a most serious time of life. From the blossom buds forth the fruit and eventually ripens. Of what use would the beauty, wealth of colors, and the fragrance of the blossom of a tree be, if it bear no fruit? Of what use would the strength and vigor and growth of youth be, if nothing remains for his after life and if no blessing be derived from it for the kingdom of God? We are not born only to enjoy youth and to pluck the roses of life. We *grow* to the greatness and perfection of life, to which our youth is to lead us. Our life here on earth is not a cheerful and delightful drama, but under the most serene surface there often broods a hidden and bitter earnestness that suddenly envelops us.

Do we not hear the warning voice coming forth from the very beauty, brightness and glory of spring telling us of this earnestness? When nature lies be-

fore us in all its beauty and grandeur, does not the thought suggest itself, how soon, and how quickly will these gay garments of the earth fade away! How soon do flowers wither and their fragrance pass away! The soft green verdure of the fields soon gives place to more somber colors. The sun begins to decline; and as Autumn and Winter draw nigh all nature is surrounded by the torpor of death! Who has not heard the sermon that the all-wise and merciful God preaches to us from the grandness and beauty of spring about the transitoriness, fickleness and vanity of all things earthly?

And when we behold youth, it would seem that the same voice of God warns us by the beauty and vigor of youthfulness, of the earnestness of life. How soon and how rapidly do the years of our youth pass away? How soon does the freshness of Spring give place to the Summer's heat? The fresh, rosy cheeks of youth soon fade away, and deep wrinkles are engraved upon the countenance. The hair grows white, and the sun of life begins to decline. Like yellow leaves in Autumn, we fall from the tree of life, and are scattered broadcast by the winds of time.

For this reason God says to youth: Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say: They please me not. Young men, and women! You look with mirth and cheerfulness at life and you know not what it conceals for you in the darkness of its bosom and what it will perhaps soon bring you. You know not how bitter and hard

the lot of your life may be, and how rough and stony the way you must travel. You know not the forests of sufferings and temptations through which you must pass, and the deep and dark and awful precipice which yawns before you even now. But if all is uncertain that life has in store for you, this one thing mark as certain, yes, a thousand times tested truth: As you spend your youth, so will be your after life! The habits you contract in youth will abide with you through life! The greatest wisdom, therefore, is the sanctification of our youth.

I wish to impress the wisdom of this fact upon your minds and hearts and therefore shall speak to you this evening of the sanctification of your youthful days.

But those among us who are already beyond this stage of life will, animated by sincere grief, look back to it with the determined resolution of repairing whatever we have neglected in our youthful days.

There are three reasons why we should strive to sanctify the time of our youth. If we consider more closely the nature and character of this period of our life, we shall find its sanctification is a necessary, an important and an indispensable duty of our life.

I say, first, that it is a necessary duty. Our whole life, every day, and every hour, belongs to our Lord and must be devoted and consecrated to His service. To Him belong the day and the night, the morning and the evening. To Him belong the Spring with its bright sunshine, and sweet flowers — and Summer with its heat and sweltering sultriness. To Him belong the Autumn with the riches of its fruits — and the Winter

with its severity and ice and snow. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, says the Scripture: the world and all they that dwell in it. Our whole life and every moment of it belongs likewise to Him; for He has created us and redeemed us on the tree of the Cross. Our childhood in its first awakening belongs to Him, and our youth in its development of strength. To Him belongs our manhood in its fullness, and to Him belongs too old age in the decline of life. At every stage of our life our heart should cry out to Heaven: "I am Thy servant and the servant of Thy Handmaid." The years of our youth must not form an exception to this purpose of life. It must be, as every other period of life, devoted and consecrated to the service of God. At every moment we must make all things subservient to this one great purpose of life. Every hour of our life we must labor for a blessed eternity, and no day must pass by without glorifying God. Many die in the flower of youth, and most have reached the fullness of this life and the right to happiness in the days of their youth.

It is precisely the sacrifice which we make in youth which is most pleasing and acceptable to God. He is delighted with the devoted child who looks up to Him in tender love; and He is pleased with the husband and wife who cheerfully bear the burdens and trials of life for love of Him. And He looks down with pleasure upon the aged man who longs to share the joys of eternal life. But the cheerful service of youth renders Him a special pleasure. The sacrifices of youth are freely made, and have no self interest which often

contaminates divine service in later life. Neither the bitter experience of life, nor the misery of sin nor disgust with the world and its false pleasures compel the young man after many false steps to return to God, but the free impulse of his love and gratitude to His Creator. The first tender budding flowers of spring are more beautiful than later on when the sun has withered their freshness. The prayer of the heart not yet corrupted by the flames of unbridled passion is the most devoted and the most ardent. For this reason God demanded in the Old Law the firstlings of life, as special sacrifice: "Thou shalt set apart all that are first born for the Lord, and all that is first brought forth — thou shalt consecrate to the Lord." Abel offered the firstlings of his flock and their fat, and the Lord had respect for Abel and his sacrifice. "The Lord is a jealous God; jealous is his name."

Or should God Who has created us for His service, be satisfied if we dedicate the morning and the flower of our life to sin, and give to Him our shattered old age? Should He be satisfied if we give the gold of our youth to our passions, and to Him the dross? Should He be satisfied if we pour out the wine of life in the service of the world and the lusts of the flesh, and throw to Him the fool husks of a sin-stained old age? And if our soul is the bride of God; if our Redeemer has shed His Sacred Blood to save our soul; if He asks for her with the dowry of his infinite merits and all His divine love, should He feel satisfied if His chosen bride, the soul, turns her back upon Him in contempt, and courts strange gods and only at the

close of life asks for the love of her first and lawful bridegroom? Every earthly bridegroom would dismiss such a bride. Will God then look with pleasure upon such a soul? To Him belong the flowers and gold of life; to Him belong the sparkling wine and the innocence of God. "The Lord is a jealous God, jealous is his name."

Oh, how foolish men think and act in regard to their youth! Youth, they say, knows no virtue; it must give vent to its passions. With a sad smile many glance at the errors and sins of their misspent youth, as if youth were privileged to live in debauchery. They say, "Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us especially use the creatures as in youth."

"Let us fill ourselves with costly wine, and ointments; and let not the flowers of time pass by."

"Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered, and let no meadow escape our riot."

"Let none of us go without his portion of luxury; for this is our portion and this our lot."

In wild lust and passion, yes, often in total forgetfulness of God, are these years spent. And yet it is precisely the time of youth that must be virtuous; this is the very time which must be devoted and consecrated to a reverential submission and service of God. Youth does not give you a right to satisfy your evil passions. It imposes upon you the sacred duty of devoting yourself heart and soul to the observance of God's laws, because they are God's laws.

Besides these general considerations, the nature and character of youth demands that it be sanctified unto God — and you will readily perceive that this is not only a necessary, but a most important duty.

What is the time of youth considered in its relation to the rest of life? It is the seed time of life, the time of growth and development. During this period the seed must be sown, so that a rich harvest will be produced. Whatever is begun in our youthful days, will be continued and perfected in later years. In the days of our youth the foundation for our further life must be laid deep and broad. The way we spend our youth will decide our success in after life.

It is true, man is always master of his life and deeds, and with the grace of God, in later years can make amends for past negligence, but as a rule the words of Scripture will hold good: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old will not depart from it." In most cases life will continue quietly and constantly building up the character commenced in youth. A stream but seldom leaves the course it has once taken. And even if one did wish to abandon the path he has trodden in the days of his youth, it would only be possible with great difficulties and strenuous efforts. The harvest will be as the seed — and the one who does not sow in Spring cannot expect to reap in Autumn. Whoever has not learned or accomplished anything in his youth, will accomplish but little in after life. We become more accomplished in doing good or evil as time goes on. The child's

piety and fear of God molds and forms youth and old age to constancy and perseverance, but vice also takes deeper root as the years roll by.

Is not experience itself the author of this saying: The habits of youth are the acts of old age? Show me the father of a family who labors in his family after the heart of God, and you will find upon inquiry that in the days of youth he was God-fearing and moral. Tell me of the able and successful merchant, or a conscientious officer, who did not possess the germs of virtue in his early youth and develop them to their best fruition. All good and devoted mothers who rule in their homes as the faithful companions of their husbands, and the intelligent educators of their children, were modest and chaste maidens in their youth. If we survey our own life, we will perceive that we are still traveling the same paths that we walked in the early days of our life; and if perchance we were obliged to take a different path, to change our mode of living, it would cost us great labor. "A young man according to his way, even when old will not depart therefrom."

For this reason how unreasonable it is, if the very foundations of our life are built on false principles and in direct contradiction to the will of God. How baneful it is, if we neglect to plant, to establish ourselves on sound principles in the days of our youth. How destructive for our whole life if we dream away its most important part, or misspend it in sin and vice. Young men! In the early days of young manhood you must lay deep and broad the foundation upon

which you can build your happiness for time and eternity! It is good for you to cherish in your hearts the blossom of every virtue, and to nourish and foster them, so that the tree of your life may one day stand loaded with choicest fruits before the judgment seat of God. It is good for you to sow the good seed of good works in the springtime of life, so that in your last days, you may stand before your Judge with hands full of good deeds. Your whole life will depend largely upon how you spend your youth! How important therefore is the sanctification of youth!

Who among you would look with indifference upon his youthful years, when he considers that the greater part of the negligence and mistakes of youth can in no case be corrected, and entirely effaced. The dews of heaven seldom fall twice upon the same pastures, and time once lost can never be regained. Think earnestly of this fact that is so often entirely forgotten.

The word that I speak dies away in the air, and can never be recalled again. Command the stone that you have hurled down the precipice to return. It would be in vain. Call back the years of your youth. It would be in vain too, for they will not and cannot return. You may lament with bitter tears the time you have misspent and lost. But the deepest sorrow and the greatest remorse can never bring them back once they have flowed into the ocean of eternity. This is the greatness and the importance of the few and transient moments of our life with which we must purchase Heaven. Whoever wastes away his sub-

stance on useless things deceives himself and destroys his own happiness.

Go and approach the deathbed of a man! Do you know what torments him the most? Do you know what renders his departure from this life to the judgment seat of God so terrible? It is the time of youth that has been neglected and spent in vice. "Oh, if I could but erase the years of my youth from the book of life," he says, "I could close my eyes in peace." "If I could forget these years of unbridled license and vice I could approach my Judge with more confidence." The Psalmist cries out, "The sins of my youth and ignorance do not remember, for there thou showest the bitterness against me and will consume me in the sin of my youth."

Would you wish to look back at the close of your life, tormented by such thoughts! Will you not use every effort to sanctify and to fulfill this duty so necessary, so important, and indispensable. "His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust," says the Holy Scripture of the death of a man who has spent his youth in vice, and who has not wiped out his sin with tears of sorrow.

But how can a young man avert such bitter pangs of soul which a misspent youth causes? How should our youthful years be sanctified? The sanctification of youth consists principally in the acquisition and practice of the virtues that should adorn the heart of every young man. The young man must above all things cultivate true manly piety, and the fear of God.

“The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” Religion must form the base upon which man builds his life, so that no storm can move him from this impregnable rock. The wise man, says our Lord, builds his house upon a rock, “And the rain and the floods came, and the winds blew; and they beat upon the house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.” Without religion a man has no support in trial, no consolation in suffering, no hope in the hour of death. Religion is an absolute necessity, a rational need for every age of our life, and no one can dispense with it, without a denial of his very being and its most imperious demands.

And the young man is obliged in a most particular manner to be religious and God-fearing. Boyhood and youth must strive to be conscientious and zealous in the discharge of their every duty. For in the time of youth we should acquire those principles which must be the law and standard of our future life. The foundations of a living faith must be laid deep and broad in the heart of the youth upon which the superstructure of perfect manhood may be built. The child is endowed by nature and trained by its parents to piety and the fear of God. As the child develops into the youth and comes to maturity, he should freely serve God and make religion the very groundwork of his life.

In youthful years true piety and the fear of God is doubly necessary, because the young and inexperienced encounter so many dangers — and because only a heart filled with faith and well grounded in religion can

overcome these temptations. Boys and girls leave the quiet family circle and gradually enter the wider spheres of human life. They soon see the faith which they so lovingly practiced treated with contempt and indifference, vilely attacked and maliciously persecuted. They come in contact with men whose lives are governed by atheistic and agnostic principles; who ridicule and sneer at faith in God and man; and to whom virtue and morality are but empty names. The result is, that spurred on by their own unruly passions, doubt soon rises in their own hearts. Poisonous plants are strewn along their path, and they are beautiful and enchanting to behold; but like Sodom's apples they appear beautiful and red to the eye but are full of foulness and ashes.

Woe then to the young man who has not fortified his soul with Christian principles and the practice of true manly piety. Woe to him, if when surrounded by these dangers he cannot lean upon the staff of God. Woe to him, if prayer, and a God-fearing life do not lead him safely through the perils that threaten the life of his soul in his youthful days. Many a young man has gone forth from his home, the pride and joy of his parents. With loving care he was trained for the duties of life, and he went forth upon the sea of life, cultured and equipped for life, like some stately ship fitted out for a voyage. And after a few years he returns to his father's house, like a broken, wrecked vessel, disabled in body and sick unto death in soul. He neglected his religious duties, he lost his faith,

and when the storm came was not able to breast its impetuous fury and sank beneath its force.

To be able to fight the good fight and to come out of the fray victorious, you must have deep down in your heart the desire to be Christlike in your life. You need only to be true to the Divine within you, and the voice of conscience in order to appear before others, in all the relations of life, as God and men would have you.

Your piety must not be assumed to suit the occasion. The spirit of true manly piety is not the sad, melancholy, brooding and bitter thing, that a gloomy fanaticism would make it. It is lightsome, joyous, cheerful, loving, compassionate and all-embracing in its kindness. The spirit of God in a youthful soul sheds abroad over the moral as well as the material world the light of deep and joyous contentment.

But how could I speak of the virtues that should adorn the youth without mentioning that virtue which should be the glorious crown on the brow of every young man and woman — the virtue of chastity!

“Need I tell you, my friends, that of all the evils in this our day, there is one which has arrived at such enormous proportions that it has received the name of ‘*the social evil*.’ The evil which finds its way into every rank and grade of society; the evil which, raising its miscreated head, now and again frightens us, and terrifies the very world by the evidence of its widespread pestilence; the evil that to-day pollutes the heart, destroys the soul of the young, and shakes our

nature and manliness to its very foundation, and brings the indignant and sweeping curse of God upon whole nations. Need I tell you that this is the terrible evil of impurity — the unrestrained passion, the foul imagination, the debased and degraded craving of this material flesh and blood of ours, rising up in rebellion, and declaring in its inflamed desires that nothing of God's law, nothing of God's Redemption — shall move it; that all may perish — but it must be satiated and gorged with the food of lust of which the Scripture says — 'The taste is death.' Of this sickening food, disgusting vice I will not speak, but of the opposite virtue — the index virtue, the virtue by which lost man is raised up to the very perfection of his spiritual nature; by which the divine effulgence of the highest resemblance is impressed upon the soul; by which the fragrance and brightness of the Virgin and her Son seem to shine in the body of man, as well as the spirit filling the whole being with its sweetness."

It must be the life-study of youth to preserve his soul and body free from the pest of unchastity. This vice is the worm that gnaws at the root of life, and destroys the most vigorous plants. It is deadly poison to soul and body. *Avoid and eschew* therefore all company and places, where no respect is paid to man's virtue or woman's chastity; where the atmosphere is loaded with unsavory odors of uncleanness. Never forget that the all-seeing eye of God is upon you at all times and in all places.

And so long as God spares your mother's life, never

fail to show her daily and hourly a love full of infinite reverence and tenderness. Let your love for your sisters be also most respectful and deferential. Think and speak of all women with respect and deference, and never permit yourself anything approaching to disrespect toward the poorest, the lowliest, the most unworthy of their sex. If you would have a sure and infallible sign marking out to you, in the intercourse of life, the man who should never be your friend, your companion or business associate, let it be disrespect to woman. The man who forgets what is due to his mother's sex is neither a true gentleman, nor a true man, and he who habitually thinks and speaks evil of women is one who long ago forfeited self respect and is unworthy the esteem of virtuous men. He is a moral leper, to be shunned carefully and mercilessly. The fear of God and true manly piety beget in the youth industry and temperance.

"An active doer, noble liver,"—should be the motto of every young man. The law of life is labor and activity. It is only when we labor with zeal and earnestness that we are fulfilling the high purposes for which we are born. Industry begets earnestness and promotes happiness.

"Buoyant spirits are an element of happiness, and activity produces them; but they fly away from sluggishness. Men's spirits are like water which sparkles while it runs, but stagnates in still pools, and breeds corruption and filth. The applause of conscience, the self respect of manhood, the consciousness of independence, a manly joy of usefulness — these constitute a happi-

ness, superior to the fever-flashes of vice—in its brightest moments. After an experience of ages, men should have learned that satisfaction is not the product of excess or of indolence, or of riches, but of industry, temperance, and usefulness. Every village has instances which ought to teach young men that he who goes aside from the simplicity of nature and purity of virtue, to wallow in excesses, carousals and surfeits, at last misses the errand of his life, and sinking with shattered body prematurely to a dishonored grave, mourns that he mistook exhilaration for satisfaction, and abandoned the very home of happiness when he yielded to the temptation of idleness and its train of vices.

Idleness begets intemperance, and it, like idleness, is an enemy of all true manliness. Temperance preserves the strength of youth and prepares the soul for every virtue. If a young man be not chaste and temperate; if he has not the strength of soul to suppress his sinful inclinations, and to restrain even his lawful desires,—then his passions will gain control of his soul—and he will become their slave. Be temperate, therefore, not only in food and drink but in all your desires. Not in the gratification of our passions, but in a wise moderation, which subordinates them to the high purpose of life. Not every pleasure is unlawful, and not every one is lawful. And the more you deny yourselves in lawful pleasures the greater will be the strength of body and soul. By industry and moderation you will lay the foundation of a permanent happiness. How terrible the thought that so many perish for time and

eternity owing to idleness and intemperance. How painful is old age when the sins of youth have made the man unfit for every task of life. How fearful must be the account rendered before the Eternal Judge.

Finally there are two more virtues which are a particular ornament of youth — obedience and modesty. It is with great pleasure that we behold these virtues in a young man, and painfully regret their absence. There is no virtue that is more necessary to a young man and corresponds more to his age than obedience and modesty. The environments, health and animal spirits of youth conspire against these virtues. We should be nobly independent,— but a modest obedience to lawful authority is not degrading but ennobling and elevating. The consequences of disrespect, and disregard, and disobedience to lawful authority are too evident to need comment.

But now let those who have passed the time of youth look back upon this springtime of life. How hopeful, how expectant we looked into the future! How many have had their fondest hopes shattered, and their most cherished ambition unrealized! Who would not live over again his youth if he could, but in a different, in a more wise manner. But alas, there is nothing left to us but to give the benefit of our experience to the youth of our day. And this we can impart to them by the uprightness and honesty of our lives. The young naturally look up to the old, and model their lives after theirs. God grant that we may have a race of young men who are chaste and pure, temperate and obedient, honest and upright, modest, God-fearing, manly and

true. God grant them the strength and the grace to live up to the high ideal of their God-like vocation. And God grant us all the immortal youth of eternal bliss in Heaven. Amen.

SERMON XXV

TRUTH AND HONESTY IN BUSINESS*

"No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon."—MATTH. 6, 24.

Man does not live for himself alone. He lives for the good of others, as well as for himself. Every one has his duties to perform—the richest as well as the poorest. To some life is pleasure, to others suffering. But the best do not live for self enjoyment, or even for fame. This strongest motive power is hopeful, useful work in every good cause.

To do our duty in this world towards God and towards man consistently and steadily, requires the cultivation of all the faculties which God has given to us. And He has given us everything. It is His Will that instructs and guides our will. It is the knowledge of good and evil, the knowledge of what is right and of what is wrong that makes us amenable to man here, and responsible to God hereafter.

Honesty and truth go well together. Honesty is truth and truth is honesty. Truth alone may not constitute a great man, but it is the most important element of a great character. It gives security to those who

* *Vide* "The Commandments" by Devine and "Self-Help" by Smiles.

employ him, and confidence to those who serve under him. Truth is the essence of principle, integrity and independence. It is the primary need of every man. Absolute veracity is more needed now than at any former period of our history. Indeed, the great need of the world at all times is men of integrity and honesty and truthfulness.

The truth of the good old maxim that "Honesty is the best policy," is upheld by the daily experience of life,—uprightness and integrity, being found as successful in business as in everything else. Integrity of word and deed ought to be the cornerstone of all business transactions. To the tradesman, the merchant, the manufacturer, it should be what honor is to the soldier, or charity to the Christian.

It must be admitted that trade tries character more severely than any other pursuit in life. It puts to the severest tests honesty, self-denial, justice, and truthfulness,—and men who pass through such trials unstained are perhaps worthy of as great honor as soldiers who prove their courage amidst the fire and peril of battles. And to the credit of the vast multitudes of men engaged in the various departments of trade it must be admitted that on the whole they pass through their trials nobly and well.

How a man uses money,—makes it, saves it, and spends it,—is perhaps one of the best tests of practical wisdom. Although money ought by no means to be regarded as the chief end of life, neither is it a trifling matter to be held in philosophic contempt, representing as it does, to so large an extent, the means of physical

comfort and social well being. Indeed, some of the finest qualities of human nature are intimately related to right use of money; such as generosity, honesty, justice and self-sacrifice, as well as the practical virtues of economy and providence.

On the other hand there are their counterparts of avarice, fraud, injustice, and selfishness as displayed by the inordinate lovers of gain; and the vices of indolence, extravagance and improvidence, on the part of those who abuse and misuse the means entrusted to them. So that a right measure and manner in getting, saving, spending, giving, taking, lending, borrowing, and bequeathing would argue a good and virtuous man.

Comfort in worldly circumstances is a condition which every man is justified in striving to attain by all honorable and worthy means. It secures that physical satisfaction which is necessary for the culture of the better part of his nature; and it enables him to provide for those of his own household, without which, says the Apostle, he is worse than the infidel. The very effort required to attain success in life with this object in view, is of itself an education; stimulating a man's sense of self-respect, bringing out his practical qualities and disciplining him in the exercise of patience and perseverance. The provident and careful man must necessarily be a thoughtful man, for he lives not merely for the present but with provident forecast makes arrangement for the future. He must also be a temperate man and exercise the virtue of self-denial, than which nothing is so much calculated to give strength to character.

The young man as he passes through life advances through a long line of tempters ranged on either side of him; and the inevitable effects of yielding is degradation in a greater or less degree. Contact with them tends insensibly to draw away from him some portion of the divine electric element with which his nature is charged; and his only mode of resisting is to utter and act out his "No" manfully and resolutely. He must decide at once, not waiting to deliberate and balance reasons; for the youth like the woman who hesitates, is lost. But temptation will come to try his strength; and once yielded to, the power to resist grows weaker and weaker. Yield once and a portion of your virtue is gone; resist manfully and the first decision will give strength for life, and repeated, it will become a habit.

We are passing through trying times upon which the seeds of dishonesty have fallen more or less abundantly and are bringing forth fruit in every section of the country and in every class of society. To study the causes of dishonesty will be more beneficial to us than to declaim against this growing evil. To know the causes of dishonesty, to be warned against everything that militates against integrity and uprightness, is in a measure to be armed and protected against this enemy of our souls. In order therefore that we may be on our guard against this insidious foe of right thinking, right doing and right living, we will consider some of the causes and consequent evils of dishonesty. Some men find in their bosom from the very first a vehement inclination to dishonest ways. Knavish propensities are inherent, born with the child and transmissible

from parent to son. The children of a sturdy thief, if taken from him at birth and reared by honest men, would doubtless have to contend against a strongly dishonest inclination. Such men become kleptomaniacs, and are fortunately soon discovered and placed where they cannot follow this evil propensity.

But a child, fair-minded and naturally honest, may become dishonest by parental example. He is early taught to be sharp in bargains and vigilant for every advantage. Little is said about honesty, and much about shrewd traffic, a condition which becomes a family anecdote. Visitors are regaled with the boy's precocious keenness. Hearing the praise of his exploits, he studies craft, and seeks parental admiration by adroit knaveries. He is taught for his safety that he must not range beyond the law; that would be unprofitable. He calculates his morality thus: Legal honesty is the best policy; dishonesty then is a bad bargain and therefore wrong; whatever profit breaks no legal statute — though it is gained by falsehood, through dishonor, unkindness, and unscrupulous conscience, — he considers fair, and says, *the law allows it*. Men may spend a long life without an indictable action and without an honest one. No law can reach the insidious ways of subtle craft. The law allows and religion forbids men to profit by others' misfortunes, to prowl for prey among the ignorant, to over-reach the simple, to suck the last life-drops from the bleeding, to hover over men as a vulture over herds, swooping down upon the weak, the straggling and the weary. The infernal craft of cunning men turns the law itself to piracy,

and works outrageous fraud even in the court room, by the decisions of judges and under the seal of justice.

A prolific source of dishonesty is *extravagance*. Extravagance,—which is foolish expense, or expense disproportionate to one's means,—may be found in all grades of society; but it is chiefly apparent among the rich, those aspiring to wealth, and those wishing to be thought affluent. Many a young man cheats his business by transferring his means to theatres, balls, expensive parties and lodges and to the nameless and numberless projects of pleasure. The enterprise of others is baffled by the extravagance of their family; for few men can make as much in a year as an extravagant woman can carry on her back in one Winter. Some are ambitious of fashionable society, and will gratify their vanity at any expense. This proportion between means and expense soon brings on a crisis. The victim is straightened for money; without it he must abandon his rank; for fashionable society remorselessly rejects all butterflies which have lost their brilliant colors. Which shall he choose, honesty and mortifying exclusion, or gayety purchased by dishonesty? The severity of this choice sometimes sobers the intoxicated brain, and a young man shrinks from the gulf, appalled at the darkness of dishonesty. But excessive vanity, high life, with or without fraud, is paradise and any other life purgatory. Here many resort to dishonesty without scruple. It is at this point that public sentiment half sustains dishonesty. It scourges the thief of necessity, and pities the thief of fashion.

The struggle with others is on the very ground of honor. A wife led from affluence to rigid poverty, from leisure and luxury to toil and want; a daughter once courted as rich, to be dis-esteemed when poor,—this is the gloomy project seen through the magic haze of despondency. Honor, love and generosity, strangely bewitched, plead for dishonesty as the only alternative to such suffering. But go, my good man, to your wife; tell her the alternative; if she is worthy of you, she will face your poverty with a courage which shall shame your fears, and lead you into its wilderness and through it, all unshrinking. Many there be who went weeping into this desert, and ere long, having found in it the fountains of the purest peace, have thanked God for the pleasure of poverty. But if your wife unmans your resolution, imploring dishonor rather than penury, may God pity and help you. You dwell with a sorceress and few can resist her wiles.

Debt, my friends, is an inexhaustible fountain of dishonesty. Debt becomes a rigorous servitude. The debtor learns the cunning tricks, delays, concealments, and frauds by which slaves evade and cheat their masters. He is tempted to make ambiguous statements, pledges with secret passages of escape, contracts with fraudulent constructions, lying excuses and more mendacious promises. He is tempted to elude responsibility, to delay settlements, to prevaricate upon terms, to resist equity, and devise specious fraud. When the eager creditor would restrain such vagrancy by law, the debtor then thinks himself released from moral

obligation, and brought to a legal game, in which it is lawful for the best player to win. He disputes true accounts, he studies subterfuges, extorts provocations, delays, and harbors in every nook and corner and passage of the law's labyrinths. At length the measure is filled up, and the malignant power of debt is known. It has opened in the hearts every fountain of iniquity; it has besoiled the conscience, it has tarnished the honor,—it has made the man a deliberate student of knavery, a systematic practitioner of fraud; it has dragged him through all the sewers of petty passions,—anger, hate, revenge, malicious folly, or malignant shame. When a debtor is beaten at every point, and the law will put her screws upon him, there is no depth in the gulf of dishonesty into which he will not plunge.

But craft has another harbor of resort for the piratical crew of dishonesty, viz: putting the property out of the law's reach by a fraudulent conveyance. Whoever runs into debt, and consumes the equivalent of his indebtedness; whoever by folly has incurred debts and lost the benefits of his outlay; whoever is legally obliged to pay for his malice or carelessness; whoever by infidelity to public trusts has made his property a just remuneration for his defaults, whoever of all these, or whoever, under any circumstances puts out of his hands property, morally or legally due to creditors, is a dishonest man. The crazy excuses which men render to their conscience are only such as every villain makes who is unwilling to look upon the black face of his crimes.

He who will receive a conveyance of property, know-

ing it to be illusive and fraudulent, is as wicked as the principal; and as much meaner, as the tool and subordinate of villainy is meaner than the master who uses him.

There is a *circle* of moral dishonesties practised because the law allows them. The very anxiety of law to reach the devices of cunning so perplexes its statutes with exceptions, limitations, and supplements, that like a castle gradually enlarged for centuries, it has its crevices, dark corners, secret holes, and winding passages,—an endless harbor for rats and vermin, where no trap can catch them. The country is villainously infested with legal rats and rascals who are able to commit the most flagrant dishonesties with impunity. They can do all wrong which is profitable, without that part which is objectionable. The very ingenuity of these miscreants excites such admiration of their skill, that their life is gilded with a specious respectability. Men proffer little esteem for blunt, necessitous thieves who rob and run away; but for a gentleman who can break the whole of God's law so adroitly as to leave man's law unbroken, who can indulge in such a conservative stealing that his fellow men award him a rank among honest men for the excessive skill of his dishonesty,—for such an one, I fear, there is almost universal sympathy.

Political dishonesty breeds dishonesty of every kind. It is possible for good men to permit single sins to co-exist with general integrity, where the evil is indulged through ignorance. Once undoubted Christians were slave traders. They might be while un-

enlightened, but not in our times. A state of mind that will *intend* one fraud will, upon occasions, intend a thousand. He that in an emergency will lie, will be supplied with emergencies. The highest wisdom tells us that he who will be unjust in the least will be unjust also in much. Circumstances may withdraw a politician from temptation to any but political dishonesty; but under temptation a dishonest politician would be a dishonest cashier,—would be dishonest anywhere, in anything. The fury which destroys an opponent's character would stop at nothing if business were thrown down. That which is true of leaders in politics, is true of subordinates. Political dishonesty in voters runs into general dishonesty, as the rotten speck taints the whole apple. A community whose politics are conducted by a perpetual breach of honesty on both sides, will be tainted by immorality throughout. Men will play the same game in their private affairs which they have learned to play in public matters. The guile, the crafty vigilance, the dishonest advantage, the cunning sharpness, the tricks and traps and sly evasions, the equivocal promises and unequivocal neglect of them, which characterizes political action, will equally characterize private action. The mind has no kitchen in which to do its dirty work whilst the parlor remains clean. Dishonesty is an atmosphere; if it comes into one apartment it penetrates every one. Whoever will lie in politics will lie in traffic; whoever will slander in politics, will slander in personal squabbles. A professor of religion who is a dishonest politician, is a dishonest Christian.

“The genius of our government directs the attention of every citizen to politics. Its spirit reaches the uttermost of society and pervades the whole mass. If its channels are slimy with corruption, what limit can be set to its malign influence? The turbulence of election, the virulence of the press, the desperation of bad men, the hopelessness of efforts which are not cunning but only honest, have driven many conscientious men from any concern with politics. This is suicidal. Thus the tempest will grow blacker and blacker and fiercer. Our youth will be caught up in its whirling bosom and dashed to pieces and its boil will break down every green thing. At God’s house the care should begin. Let the hand of discipline smite the leprous lips which shall utter the profane heresy, ‘*All is fair in politics.*’ If any hoary professor, drunk with the mingled wine of excitement, shall tell our youth that a Christian man may act in politics by any other rule of morality than the law of God, and that wickedness done for a party is not as abominable as if done for man, or that any necessity justifies or palliates dishonesty in word or deed, let such an one go out of the camp and his pestilent breath no longer spread contagion among our youth. No man who loves his country should shrink from her side when she groans with raging distempers. Let every Christian man stand in his place, rebuke every dishonest practice, scorn a political as well as a personal lie, and refuse with indignation to be insulted by the solicitation of an immoral man. Let good men of all parties require honesty, integrity, veracity, and morality in politics,

and there, as powerfully as anywhere else, the requisitions of public sentiment will ultimately be felt.

“A corrupt public sentiment produces dishonesty. A public sentiment in which dishonesty is not disgraceful, in which bad men are respectable, are trusted, are honored, are exalted, is a curse to the young. The fever of speculation, the universal derangement of business, the growing laxity of morals, is, to an alarming extent, introducing such a state of things. Men of notorious immorality, whose dishonesty is flagrant, whose private habits would disgrace the ditch, are powerful and popular. A man stained with every sin except those which required courage; into whose head a pure thought has not entered for forty years, in whose heart an honorable feeling would droop for very loneliness; — in evil he was ripe and rotten; hoary and depraved in deed, in word, in his present life and in all his past; evil when by himself and viler when among men; corrupting to the young; to domestic fidelity a recreant; to common honor a traitor, to honesty an outlaw; to religion a hypocrite; base in all that is worthy of man, and accomplished in whatever is disgraceful; and yet this wretch could go where he would, enter good men’s dwellings and purloin their votes. Men would curse him, yet obey him; warn their sons against him and lead them to the polls for him. A public sentiment which produces such ignominious knaves cannot breed honest men.”

If the shocking stupidity of the public mind to atrocious dishonesties, is not aroused, if good men do not bestir themselves to drag the young from this foul

sway, if the relaxed bands of honesty are not tightened and conscience intoned to a severer morality, our night is at hand, our midnight not far off. Woe to that guilty people that sits down upon broken laws and wealth saved by injustice. Woe to a generation fed upon the bread of fraud, whose children's inheritance shall be a perpetual memento of their father's unrighteousness; to whom dishonesty shall be made pleasant by association with the revered memories of father, brother and friend.

Absconding agents, swindling schemes and defalcations occurring in such melancholy abundance, have ceased to be wonders and rank with the common accidents of fire and flood. The budget of each week is incomplete without its runaway cashier, defaulter, and swindling postoffice officials; and as waves which roll to the shore are lost in those which follow on, so the villainies of each fresh week obliterate the record of the last.

The mania of dishonesty cannot arise from local causes; it is the result of disease in the whole community, an eruption betokening foulness of the blood, blotches symptomatic of a disordered system.

Financial agents are especially liable to the temptations of dishonesty. Safe merchants and visionary schemers, sagacious adventurers and rash speculators, frugal beginners, and retired millionaires, are constantly around them. Every word, every act, every entry, every letter suggests only wealth,—its germ, its bud, its blossom, its golden harvest. Its brilliance dazzles the sight, its seductions stir the appetites, its

power fires the ambition, and the soul concentrates its energies to obtain wealth, as life's highest and only joy.

Those who mean to be rich often begin by imitating the expensive courses of those who *are* rich. They are also tempted to venture, before they have means of their own, in brilliant speculations. How can a young cashier, or clerk pay the drafts of his illicit pleasures, or procure the seed for the harvest of speculation, out of his meagre salary? Here first begins to work the leaven of death. The mind wanders in dreams of gain; it broods over projects of unlawful riches, stealthily at first and then with less reserve; at last it boldly meditates the possibility of being dishonest and *safe*. When a man can seriously reflect upon dishonesty as a possible and profitable thing, he is already deeply dishonest. At times the mind shrinks from its own thoughts, and trembles to look down the giddy cliff on whose edge its thoughts poise, or over which they fling themselves like sporting sea-birds. But these imaginations will not be driven from the heart where they have once nested. They haunt a man's business, visit him in dreams, and vampire-like, fan the slumbers of the victim whom they will destroy. In some feverish hour, vibrating between conscience and avarice, the man staggers to a compromise. To satisfy his conscience he refuses to *steal*; and to gratify his avarice, he *borrow*s the funds, not openly, not of owners, not from men, but from the till, the safe, the vaults.

He resolves to restore the money before the discov-

ery can ensue, and pocket the profits. Meanwhile, false entries are made, perjured oaths are sworn, forged papers are filed. His expenses grow profuse, and men wonder from what fountain so copious a stream can flow.

Let us stop here to survey his condition. He flourishes, is called prosperous, thinks himself safe. Is he safe or honest? He has stolen, and embarked the amount upon a sea over which wander perpetual storms, where wreck is the common fate, and escape an accident; and now all his chance for the semblance of honesty is staked upon the return of his embezzlements, from among the sands, the rocks, and currents, the winds and waves and darkness of tumultuous speculation. At length dawns the day of discovery. His guilty dreams have long foretokened it. As he confronts the disgrace almost face to face, how changed is the hideous aspect of his deed from that fair face of promise with which it tempted him! Conscience and honor and plain honesty now come back to sharpen his anguish. Over-awed by the prospect of open shame, of his wife's disgrace, and his children's beggary, he breaks down, and slinks out of life a frantic suicide.

Some there are, however, less supple to shame. They meet their fate with cool impudence, defy their employers, brave the court, and too often with success. The delusion of the public mind or the confusion of affairs is such, that while petty culprits are tumbled into prison, a cool, calculating, though unmitigated scoundrel is pitied, dandled and nursed by a sympathizing community.

A sickly sentimentality too often enervates the administration of justice; and the pardoning power becomes the master's key to let out unwashed, unrepentant criminals. They have fleeced us, robbed us, and are ulcerous sores to the body politic; yet our heart turns to water over their merited punishment. A fine young fellow, by accident, writes another's name for his own; by a mistake equally unfortunate he presents it at the bank, innocently draws out the large amount, generously spends a part and absent-mindedly hides the rest. Hard-hearted wretches there are who would punish him for this! Young men admiring the neatness of the affair, pity his misfortune, and curse a stupid jury that knew no better than to send to the penitentiary him whose skill deserved a cashiership. Bulletins from Stillwater inform us daily what he is doing, as if he were a hero, a Napoleon at St. Helena! At length pardoned, he will go forth again to renewed liberty!

If there be one quicker than another, by which the State shall assist crime and our laws foster it, it is that course which assures every dishonest man that it is easy to defraud, easy to avoid arrest, easy to escape punishment and easiest of all to obtain pardon.

All the bankruptcies of commerce are harmless compared to the bankruptcy of public morals. Should the Atlantic Ocean break over our shores and roll sheer across to the Pacific, sweeping every vestige of cultivation and burying our wealth it would be mercy compared to the ocean deluge of dishonesty and crime which, sweeping over the whole land, has spared our

wealth but takes our virtue. What are cornfields and vineyards, what are stores and manufacturies, and what are gold and silver and all the precious commodities of the earth, among beasts? — and what are men bereft of conscience and honor?

We will forget the past and hope for a more cheerful future. We turn to you, young men! All good men, all patriots, to watch your advance upon the stage and implore you to be worthy of yourselves and of your revered ancestry. You are favored of Heaven, with a free land, a noble inheritance of wise laws, and a prodigality of wealth in prospect; advance to your possessions! May you settle down as Israel of old, a people of God in a promised and protected land, true to yourselves, true to your country and true to your God!

Surely there is great need of such men in our day, true to themselves and true to God. Such men are, everything taken into account, the best calculated to succeed.

And such men be they born ever so lowly are God's true gentlemen, men whom all are forced to respect, because they are incapable of meanness, fraud, baseness or untruthfulness.

"God give us men." A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor, men who will not lie;
Men who are honest and true!

Amen.

SERMON XXVI

CHRISTIAN MANHOOD

"This above all,—to thine own self be true; and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

Our true self is what we are in God's mind, what He wishes us to be in our day and generation, so as most to benefit the world amid which His design has placed us. Let each man of us learn to be, and set himself manfully to be an,

"Active doer, noble liver,
Strong to labor, sure to conquer,"

and we shall not only fill our place well in Church and State, but help to our utmost, to make the present age hold a glorious place in the annals of the world.

The great need of the present day is men of great character. And by character I mean the firm habitual disposition to truthfulness, honor, integrity, generosity and resolute energy of purpose, without which no man ever was or can be a true man. These qualities are formed in the child by teaching and still more by the example of his parents. Truthfulness, integrity and goodness form the essence of manly character, or as a distinguished writer has it, inbred loyalty unto virtue, which can serve her without a livery. He is strong to

do good, strong to resist evil and strong to bear up under difficulty and misfortune.

And speaking of honor, the bright crown of all manly character the poet but expresses the sentiment of the Church in these lines:

"The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is — spotless reputation,— that away,
Men are but gilded loam, painted clay.
A jewel in a ten-times barred up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honor is my life; both grow in one;
Take honor from me, and life is done."

But we must not confound what is here called honor with mere fame; there were and there are many of the noblest souls, who are as careless of what men may think of them as they are jealous of the testimony of their own conscience and anxious to stand well in the secret judgment of the All-seeing God.

There is nothing that cannot be endured, save dishonor, says the great St. Martin of the Fourth century; observe therefore your own actions and do not be careless about them because they are hidden from the public eye; for it matters but little that none behold them, since you are a witness to them yourself. It is the precious quality of a great soul, not to be vacillating, but ever consistent with oneself and fearlessly hopeful of the end of life.

The Catholic conception of honor is spotless integrity in the sight of God, much more even than an unstained reputation in the judgment of the world. The former is the sure foundation of the latter; — and it

is chiefly about it that every true man should be concerned. If we are without reproach before our own conscience and in the presence of God, there can be but little fear for our good name among men.

Supreme and loving reverence for the Divine Majesty, and the filial fear of rendering oneself displeasing to Him,—such is the habitual sense of the Christian soul that helps to keep it free from every secret stain. It is the fear of the Lord under another name. And where it possesses the heart of man, it is impossible that it should not preserve his outward life from voluntary stain. The purity and hardness of the diamond belong to the very first particles which unite at its heart's core; the others which the mysterious laws of the Creator attract around these to increase and perfect the beauteous crystalline mass must needs share the qualities of the former. The light which fills it, the perfect purity which gives even that light its highest value, belong to the very heart of the gem. The most beautiful, the most manly, the most heroic characters in the esteem of a rightly judging world, are men whose hearts have never lost their personal purity, souls in whose very center the fire of God's love lives unquenchably and whose lives shine with undimmed and surpassing splendor only because from childhood to the grave they "walked by His light in darkness."

The nobility of soul, of which I speak here, is the joint product of God's grace and our own generous co-operation. Parents can and do contribute greatly toward the creation of this nobility of soul and con-

duct; it is, speaking under God, the result of one's own fidelity to the Divine Voice ever speaking in conscience, to the Divine Light ever showing steadily the path of duty and honor, and to the impulse of the Divine Spirit urging the boy of the beggar as well as the boy of the prince to aim high, and do nobly and be in all things true to the light and the truth within them.

"I have neither riches nor power, nor birth to recommend me; yet, if I live, I trust I shall not be of less service to manhood and my friends, than if I had been born with these advantages." Thus at the age of twenty spoke a poor lad who had been brought up in the shop of his father, and who was when he wrote these words in his diary, a druggist's apprentice. The world knows to what a height of pure fame he attained by dint of heroic labor, while the laborious life found its fittest and sweetest reward in the peace and blessing of the Church of his fathers which took the weary traveler to her embrace.

It is conduct, that manifests "the active doer, noble liver." Do the work you have to do bravely and well. The disposition to seek to be perfect in everything to which one sets one's hand, to make the most of the task allotted for the present day and hour, is a divine instinct, which if followed faithfully, will lead to certain eminence, to eminence in learning, in wealth, or in statesmanship; to eminence in art, in eloquence, or in sanctity, according to one's chosen sphere of labor.

Look forth upon the various walks of life, in Church or State; you will find that the men most eminent and most honored in every profession and em-

ployment areⁿ the men who have put their heart in their work,—who have begun with the determination to do as did the great king of Juda, who, “wrought that which was good and right and truthful before the Lord his God,—desiring to seek his God with all his heart; and he did it, *and prospered*.”

“McKinley would not have become president if he had not previously been a zealous teacher, a responsible soldier, a conscientious statesman. Neither Lincoln nor Grant started as a baby with a precocity for the White House, or an irresistible genius for ruling men. So no one should be disappointed because he was not endowed with tremendous gifts in the cradle. His business is to do the best he can, wherever his lot may be cast, and advance at every honorable opportunity in the direction towards which the inward monitor, his conscience, points. Let duty be the guiding star and success will surely be the crown, to the full measure of one’s industry and ability.”

And let me say to the young men in particular, do not wait for opportunities. You would only resemble the stolid traveler in the fable who having come to a river which lay in his path, sat down on the bank till all the water shall have flowed by. *You* would seek for a fairy, or make a raft on which to cross.

God gives man the power of invention to enable him to find resources against the difficulties which impede his progress. The difficulty itself is often the most golden opportunity. At any rate men of resolute temper seek and find or make their opportunities, just as the industrious farmer often makes the very soil on

which he grows his crops. Opportunities! Why, life is one grand continuous opportunity from infancy to our latest day. The conscientious, the resolute, and the thrifty turn each hour into golden treasures; — the listless, the stolid, the sensual, like our Indians, allow teeming mines to lie idle at their feet, with countless treasures unknown, unappreciated, undeveloped.

Give us, therefore, in the conduct of life, men who have a purpose, who know what they have to do, and are determined to succeed; whose firm trust in God above them only increases their faith in themselves; *men who neglect nothing*; who constantly discipline their own minds, their own hearts and exercise over their own powers and passions a sovereign control; men whose watchword in all their undertakings and difficulties, in all their alternations of bearing and forbearing, is *duty*; and who in their labors, their successes, their failures, find themselves superior to fatigue, to good or ill luck, to praise or to blame,— because they begin and persevere and hope through a sense of duty,— of a sacred debt due to God and their own conscience.

Surely there is great need of such men in our day. And because they are thus dutiful and true,— they will be diligent, laborious, persevering, self denying and self reliant, because placing their main dependence on God and putting forth to please Him, in their every work and endeavor, their whole strength and industry, such men are,— everything taken into account,— the best calculated to succeed. And such men,— be they born ever so lowly, are God's true noblemen,— the

men whom all are forced to respect,— because they are incapable of meanness, fraud, baseness, or untruthfulness. These are some of the features of the true Catholic Forester ; true men so needed at all times but especially now. Such men are God's noblemen. This court should be a model one, made up of men of character, men of Christian manhood. Let it be known far and wide that to be a member of this court a man must be a practical Catholic in the true and only sense of the term. A practical Catholic is one who faithfully and devoutly attends Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation ; who loves to frequent the sacraments, because it is only there he can obtain the strength to fight the battle of life ; who takes an active interest in the welfare of his parish and gladly contributes his full share towards defraying the expenses of his parish ; who loves the Church as his Mother and rejoices in her triumphs and is saddened at her reverses ; for no one can love God and not love the Church, just as no one can have God for his Father who has not the Church for his Mother. Oh, for men of true Christian manhood. Men who are able at all times and in all places, to stand up for their faith and by their irreproachable conduct command the respect of all. We are told that Diogenes sought with a lantern at noontide in ancient Athens for a perfectly honest man, and sought in vain. In the market place he cried aloud, "Hear me, O men " ; and, when a crowd collected around him, he said scornfully, "I called for men, not pygmies."

The world has a standing advertisement over the

door of every profession; every occupation; every calling; "Wanted a True Man."

Wanted a man who will not lose his individuality in a crowd, a man who has the courage of his convictions, who is not afraid to say, "No," though all the world says, "Yes."

God calls a man to be upright and pure and generous, but he calls him also to be intelligent and skillful and strong and brave.

"If the youth," to quote a learned author, "should start out with the fixed determination that every statement that he makes shall be the truth; that every promise that he makes shall be redeemed to the letter; that every appointment shall be kept with the strictest faithfulness and with full regard of other men's time; if he should hold his faith, his reputation as a priceless treasure, feel that the eyes of the world are upon him, that he must not deviate a hair's breadth from the truth and right; if he should take such a stand at the outset, he would come to have almost unlimited credit and the confidence of all, and would develop into a noble man.

What are palaces, what are equipages, what though a man could cover a continent with his title deeds or an ocean with his commerce, compared with a conscious rectitude, with a face that never turns pale at the accuser's voice, with a bosom that never throbs with the fear of exposure, with a heart that might be turned inside out and disclose no stain of dishonor? To have borne no man a wrong; to be true to the faith to which we have sworn solemn allegiance; to have put your signature to no paper to which the purest angel in

Heaven might not have been an attesting witness; to walk and to live unseduced within an arm's length of what is not our own, with nothing between our desire and its gratification but the invisible law of rectitude — this is to be a man.

“The wisest man could ask no more of God
Than to be simple, modest, manly, true.”

Amen.

SERMON XXVII

DEDICATION OF A HOSPITAL

It is just and proper that the dedication of an institution devoted to the alleviation of human suffering should be marked by great solemnity, for to alleviate human suffering is the highest and noblest work of man. Many, various and formidable are the ills to which man is subject. Upon whatever side we look, we behold the victims of pain. Misery and suffering seem to be the lot of the vast majority of mankind. There is no home so happy, no avenue so secluded that disease will not penetrate. And, wheresoever it stalks, it is followed by a long train of sorrows.

It is the highest duty of science to combat disease, the most dreaded foe of man, and hence among all the walks of life whose gates are open to young men of noble ambition, the medical profession commends itself most highly. Few can appreciate the doctor's work, and the doctor's worth, as can the priest, for he follows him to the sick as the physician of souls. It has been well said that the skillful, conscientious doctor stands as a sentinel between man and death. Upon his knowledge, skill and care often depend precious lives. To him the child piteously looks to save for it the father's fostering care, or the mother's priceless

love; to him the wife appeals to snatch from death the father of her children; and to him strong men, racked on beds of agony, reach out their hands for succor and the restoration of health and strength. The first cry of the victim of disease is for the doctor's care.

To-day, however, it is a recognized fact that without the facilities which the hospital affords, the skill and attention of the best doctors is seriously hampered in coping with disease. The trained hand of the nurse is to-day more than ever essential to the success of the physician and surgeon. And the hospital of to-day is the highest combination of medical and surgical skill and intelligent fostering care of trained nurses which it is possible to achieve — and as such the hospital is a friend to every home in the community. It is fitting, therefore, that great solemnity should mark the dedication of this beautiful institution, erected by devoted hands and noble hearts for the alleviation of human suffering.

But the hospital stands not only for what is best in medical skill, and devoted, intelligent care of the sick, it is also the embodiment of one of the most beautiful forms of Christian charity. Charity is the highest fruitage of religion, and the truer the religion, the higher the charity which it begets. The Christian religion is by principle and tradition a living source and centre of charity. The vital doctrines of the Church demand works of charity, as the essential evidences of inward faith. Her most loyal and devoted children are known by the consecration of will and energy to works of charity. Her most glorious monuments

strewn along the course of time and marking her passage through the nations, are the homes of charity — monasteries, hospitals, asylums. The decrees of councils, the letters of pontiffs, the lessons of her ascetic writers, all urge, command charity.

Charity as we understand it, is that love for our fellow man which induces us to sympathize with him in his sorrows, to alleviate his pains, to relieve his wants. With Christ the Church teaches that the love of the neighbor is a precept as binding upon man, as that of the love of God, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The neighbor, the Catechism explains, is every child of Adam without regard to race, language, creed or personal merit. The inheritance of our common humanity makes every man our neighbor.

But we cannot understand Christian charity, unless we understand the motives that underlie it, and lift it infinitely above mere natural philanthropy. Those motives are not founded on mere human pity, aroused at the sight of human suffering, nor on the desire to perform noble and generous acts; they are rooted in the Christian's love of Christ, Who not only consecrated all that is weak and defenseless in humanity, but identified Himself with what is most lowly in the eyes of the world. "Amen, I say unto you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it unto me."

In the last judgment the just shall be rewarded, because when the Lord was hungry, they gave Him to eat, when He was thirsty, they gave Him to drink, when He was in prison, they came to visit Him; and the reprobate shall be driven from the presence of the Judge, because their record has no mention of these deeds of charity. Charity to the neighbor is endowed with the highest value to which a human act may lay claim. It is the tribute of pure, disinterested personal love, from the redeemed to the Redeemer. In the poor and sick Christ appears personified. Their own merits or demerits are lost to view; their faces shine with the beauty of Christ; their needs, are His needs; thus words of gratitude, are His words: "Amen, I say unto you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it unto me."

These supernatural motives are the secure foundations of works of charity in the Church. The personification of Christ in suffering humanity invests all forms of misery with a divine halo.

The hearts of Christians believing in the personification of Christ in the poor and sick are drawn to them with a power they may not resist, under penalty of refusing tender love to the Babe of Bethlehem, and the Saviour of Calvary.

Heroic charity abounds in the Church. I mean that charity which cheerfully sacrifices life in the service of the neighbor. The missionary embarking for the island of Molokai to spend his life in the service of the lepers; the Sisters leaving their convent homes

to minister to the contagious sick — the priest whispering, amid shot and shell, the words of absolution to the dying soldiers — such scenes are common in God's Church. Not less heroic is the charity exercised within the walls of every Catholic hospital. The devoted women in charge of these institutions are animated by the highest motives. They have spoken before the altar three vows binding them for life: virginity, poverty and obedience. By these vows they are fitted for, and confined to their vocation. They are free from all family ties and obligations; they are free from all care of worldly things, from all desire of worldly advancements, from all promptings of selfish interest. Their time, their love, is undivided, all going into the service of God and of the neighbor.

But, whence the holy courage of these soldiers of charity? For courage is needed to leave home and friends, to close the soul to the visions of earthly happiness that arise unbidden before the fancy of youth. Courage is needed to bind oneself to the perpetual disinterested service of beings whom the world deems repulsive, and whom it rejects from its presence. This courage comes from faith. Such courage gold could not purchase, glory could not inspire. But one motive brings them to the convents, but one motive holds them to their work — the love of their Saviour. I do not wish to be understood as ignoring the humanitarian grounds upon which charity may be made to rest; but if we desire great sacrifices then we must place the human heart upon the wings of faith, and

from the throne of God it will return inebriated with His love, strong with His strength; and all things are then possible to us.

Charity, the love of the neighbor, is essentially the product of Christianity. There was a time when there was no charity. There was a time when whatever the power of the Cæsars to conquer nations, whatever might be the eloquence of Roman and Greek orators, charity was unknown. It was a time when the philosophy of the day declared pity for the sick, and the unfortunate to be a weakness; when the maimed and the lamed and the old, by imperial edict, were committed to watery graves. "It was the time of Paganism, before the love of Christ and the faith of Christ had come to save the children of men."

The spirit of Christian charity secures in the service of man what is most valuable and most difficult to be obtained — the sweetness and tenderness of disinterested love. It is not bread or medicine that is most prized by the sick; it is the smile, the soft caress, the kind hopeful word. The heart rather than the mouth must be fed, the soul rather than the body must be warmed. All this is done without effort and done with exquisite delicacy, when the heart is in the work. The Sisters are inspired by the highest motive — the pure love of Christ. They could not endure the religious life unless their hearts were all on fire with the love of Christ. The love of Christ, then, is the sure foundation of this institution. This spirit of Christian charity will ever be a solace to the sick and a comfort to the dying. And true charity knows no

distinction of caste or sect, like the mercy of God it is all-embracing. The success of this hospital is already assured, for the mark in the past is a pledge of further success. It starts upon its career with the best wishes of the entire community and in the name of that community we are met here to-day to bid St. Raphael's Hospital God speed in its mission of mercy. And the spirit of love for the neighbor which was the inspiration of this institution will lead us all to love one another most sincerely, and rejoice in all the good that is done, as our heavenly Father above rejoices in it. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII

ST. PATRICK

"Let us now praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation; . . . these men of mercy whose godly deeds have not failed; good deeds continue with their seeds; their posterity are a holy inheritance; and their seed hath stood in the covenants; and their children for their sakes remain forever; their seed and their glory shall not be forgotten. Let the people show forth their wisdom, and the church declare their praise."—ECCLES. 44.

The characteristic qualities of great men are delineated in their works. There are certain leading features which characterize their activity and distinguish them from all other men. Great men impress, as it were, their own individuality upon their works. Thus Shakespeare's dramas are a perfect mirror of his character; he has impressed upon them so forcibly his own individuality, that they are beyond compare. The author of the world-renowned "Last Supper," Leonardo da Vinci, has impressed upon all his paintings the image of his own pure soul in a most singular manner. And so it is with all great men, the leading features in their character are impressed upon their work.

St. Patrick, whose feast the Church commemorates to-day, is no exception to this rule. He was a man of a strong and noble individuality and he impressed it upon his work — the founding of the Church in Ire-

land. I propose, therefore, to consider briefly the leading features in St. Patrick's character, which may be summed up as follows:

A great supernatural attachment to the see of Peter; a missionary apostolic zeal for the conversion of souls; and a spirit of heroism in suffering for God. These were the three great features in the character of St. Patrick, and these qualities he transmitted to the church which he founded in Ireland.

In the first place then, St. Patrick was truly devoted to the Holy See. He recognized in the Successor of St. Peter, the Representative of Christ, the Head of the Church Catholic, and loved him as such. Coming directly from Rome, and filled with ecclesiastical knowledge, he preached fidelity and unswerving obedience to the Chair of Peter, to the Pope of Rome.

But some writers deny his Roman mission. They say that St. Patrick was not sent to Ireland by the Holy See. By whom then was he sent? And from whom did he receive his mission to preach the Gospel in Ireland? They do not tell us, but history does, and in no uncertain language. St. Probus, one of Ireland's earliest writers, tells us that when St. Patrick proposed to himself to evangelize Ireland he prayed to Christ Our Lord that He might lead him to the feet of the Roman Pontiff, there to receive authority to preach the Gospel to the Irish people. And he continues: "Patrick having come to Rome was most honorably received by the Pope, Celestine, and sent into Ireland by that Pontiff." This testimony of the sainted biographer is corroborated by writers of every

age and country. Thus the Four Masters, under date of 431, tell us that St. Patrick was ordained to the Episcopacy by the Holy Pope, Celestine I, who commissioned him to go to Ireland to preach the Gospel.

But why do I argue? Why dispute with men who would have the world believe a most unmitigated falsehood? Nothing is more clearly proved than the subordination of the new-born church in Ireland to the Roman See — a subordination which was taught, decided, and regulated by Patrick. He came to Ireland by command of the Holy See; he revealed to her the grand design of Almighty God in His Church; he taught her that Peter was the Rock which was to sustain her in every storm; and he bound her to this rock, the “Rock of Ages,” to Peter’s Chair, by firmest bonds of obedience and love, and infused into her soul his own supernatural devotion to Rome — that devotion which has ever marked the Church in Ireland.

It is a curious fact that when the Christian world was confused by the pretensions of the antipopes, Ireland was never led astray; with an instinct truly supernatural, she never failed to discover, to proclaim and to obey the true Pontiff. She is the only Catholic nation that never was separated for a moment from St. Peter, nor mistaken in her allegiance to him.

But it might be urged that Ireland was too far removed from Rome to be easily led astray, as the confusion caused by the antipopes seldom spread farther than the continent. Why then did she not renounce her allegiance to Rome when England apostatized? When the evil genius of Henry, of Edward, of Eliza-

beth, of Cromwell — stalked through the land and with loud voice demanded of the Irish people separation from Rome or their lives — why did they consent to die rather than renounce their faith, their union with Rome? Was it because the false religion was presented to them by the detested hands that had robbed their country of her crown? Was it because the new gospel was preached by such gentle missionaries as the “humane and tender hearted” Oliver Cromwell? This may have told with the people, I grant; but no natural explanation can explain the supernatural fact that a whole nation preferred for a thousand years, confiscation, exile, death, rather than surrender their faith, their union with Rome. And it is because the spirit of St. Patrick lived on in the Church in Ireland; because he had transmitted to her his own supernatural attachment to the Holy See. He had engrafted her on the Rock of Peter, that Rock upon which is built the impregnable Church of God, against which the crested billows may rise and foam, but they fall harmless at its feet. The bond with which St. Patrick bound Ireland to this Rock has never been severed. Each succeeding Pope, from Celestine I, who sent Patrick to Ireland, to our glorious Benedict, has inherited her prayers, her love, and her obedience.

The second prominent feature in St. Patrick’s character, I said, was missionary apostolic zeal for the conversion of souls. He burned with the desire, he tells us himself, to instruct the world, to enlighten those that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

This missionary zeal, this burning desire to spread the Gospel was his great ruling feeling. He is the only Apostle who entered a country entirely pagan, and left it at his death entirely Christian. And it was not only Catholic and Christian at his death, but according to the most ancient records, the most holy nation God had gathered into the bosom of His Church. And St. Patrick transmitted this missionary zeal to the Church which he founded.

To prove this, I need but remind you of the days of Ireland's monasticism — of those days when the world acknowledged the miracle of Ireland's holiness. Never since Christ proclaimed the truth among men — never was seen so extraordinary and miraculous a thing as that a whole people should become almost entirely a nation of monks and nuns as soon as they became Catholic and Christian.

There had been the ruin and desolation of almost all the rest of the world. Hordes of barbarians poured in streams over the world sweeping every vestige of civilization and Christianity before them. The whole world seemed to be now falling back into the darkness and chaos of the earliest times; but Ireland, sheltered by the encircling waves, converted and sanctified by the labors of St. Patrick, opened her schools and learned institutions, the first universities, as it were, to the children and scholars of the young nations, who had conquered the soil of the Roman empire, to be conquered in their turn by the faith of Rome.

But the sons of St. Patrick were not content with instructing the vast numbers that flocked to their

shores from every clime, they had inherited Patrick's missionary zeal, they realized the necessity of spreading the Gospel abroad, of carrying their knowledge and faith afar, and of penetrating into the most distant lands to watch and combat paganism. The missionaries launched forth from their Green Isle, they covered the land and the seas of the West, unwearied navigators they landed in the most distant islands; they fertilized the continent by successive immigrations, and these children of St. Patrick not only evangelized the people of these foreign countries, but founded monasteries and great seats of learning. So undeniable were their exertions, that they left Scotland, Britain, Gaul, Burgundy, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Iceland, and even Vinland on our own shores under a debt of eternal gratitude. To name Iona, Lendisfane, Bangor, Luxeuil, St. Gaul, Bobbio, is to name centres of civilization and faith of world-wide renown, established by the children of St. Patrick. There is hardly a land in the whole world wherein do not rest the bones of an Irish missionary.

Our own great country, our grand America, which Providence seems to have designed for the great meeting place of all mankind, is dotted with churches, colleges and ecclesiastical institutions of every kind. But who built them? Who covered our vast country with glorious churches and grand Catholic institutions? All credit and honor to every Catholic race. All credit and honor to the Catholic Frenchman, to the Catholic German. The Germans in this country — those brave men; those sons of Catholics; those de-

scendants from ages when the great Roman emperors upheld the sceptre for so many centuries in defence of the altar, are worthy of their sires; they have done great things in this country and will do still greater; but it is, after all, the children of St. Patrick who have done the lion's share of the work. Great America — vast, grand, free; to what shall I liken thee, my native land, unless to the mighty ocean, whose surface mirrors the Almighty's form? I glory in thy greatness, in thy immensity, but in thy prosperity forget not the God of nations, Who created thee, and forget not what thou owest to the sons of St. Patrick and aid them and their last struggle for freedom.

I now come to the third feature in St. Patrick's character; viz.: a spirit of heroism in suffering for God.

St. Patrick, as you all know, was a child of adversity. In his early youth he was carried off by pirates, and enslaved in Ireland. He passed six years on the bleak mountains of that country, exposed to all the inclemencies of the seasons, and endured suffering unspeakable without a murmur. It was during these years of adversity and suffering that he prepared himself unconsciously for his future labors — the conversion of Ireland.

That the Church which he founded in Ireland was a suffering Church, I need not tell you. It is true, in the first three centuries of her existence she was a glorious Church "without spot or wrinkle," she stood forth as a beacon light to all the world, but her bridal robe was soon changed for the purple garment of

suffering. Suffering Ireland! How the very name thrills through the soul, and stirs the deepest fountains of its sympathies. How many mournful recollections does it not awaken? Who has not shared to a greater or less extent in the tender feelings embodied in the following touching lines of Erin's sweetest, greatest poet:

"The stranger shall hear thy lament o'er his plains;
The sigh of thy harp shall be sent o'er the deep;
Till thy tyrants themselves, as they rivet thy chains,
Shall pause o'er their captives and weep."

But why has the Church of St. Patrick ever been a suffering Church? What was her crime? The stern refusal to abandon the Catholic faith and subscribe to the new fangled and ever-changing religious notions of England constitutes her greatest crime. No language can adequately portray the refinements of cruelty by which this crime has been visited by England for centuries. The penal code which England adopted for Ireland would have disgraced the statute book of the Grand Turk himself! No government whether Christian, Mohammedan or Pagan, was ever sullied with more crimes or marked with more utter baseness.—I recoil from this recital! I will not harrow up your souls by relating the anguish which Ireland endured in the days when her faith was tried, in the days of the penal laws and of famine, when her children preferred death on the gibbet, starvation in their cabins, rather than abandon the faith brought by St. Patrick from Rome, and left as the richest of legacies to their fathers! Never was a nation's faith and

nationality more perfectly united. In other lands individuals suffered for their fidelity to faith, and all credit to them — but Ireland suffered as a nation, she exhibited to the world a nation of martyrs, suffering as a nation for their holy faith. Had Ireland betrayed her trust and become protestant with England she might be prosperous to-day — but because she spurned the temptation and clung to the faith given to her by St. Patrick, she is not prosperous, but poor, like the Lord for Whom she suffered!

O how truly did St. Patrick impress the qualities of his own great soul upon the Irish Church! And she has ever remained true to him, and true to her God. To-day St. Patrick looks down upon her from his high seat of bliss, and his heart rejoices. To-day the thousands of her virgin and martyr saints bespeak her praises in the high courts of Heaven. To-day her children scattered over the four quarters of the earth plead in prayer for her liberation. May we not hope that God will comfort His “little one” and speak to her as He did to weeping Israel! May we not hope that He will say to her in His infinite mercy: “Poor little one, tossed with tempest, and without all comfort; behold I will lay thy stones in order, and thy foundations with sapphires.”

O God Who art just and merciful, hear Thy children call on Thee! In the day of rack and gibbet they were faithful to Thee; bless them in their great and final struggle for the land Thou gavest them, and restore to freedom Thy long-enslaved people!

Erin, Mother Erin, may thy children hope to see thee

come out of this struggle more glorious and resplendent! May the shackles of slavery that have long bound thee to feudal lords be stricken from thy limbs, and may the full morn of freedom shine around thee yet, that thou mayest be all that we wish thee:

“Great, glorious and free,
First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea.”

Amen.

SERMON XXIX

PATRIOTISM *

To-day America makes solemn commemoration of the loyalty of her sons who, in their country's darkest hour of peril, offered up their lives on the altar of patriotism. To-day Columbia, fair and peerless Queen, in conscious strength, bows her majestic head and sends unto Almighty God the homage of a nation's gratitude. It is well to find from time to time occasions to recall vividly to mind certain principles and facts, whether in the supernatural or the natural order, upon which important events revolve. And such an occasion presents itself to-day when we have come here in gratitude to God to do honor to the nation's heroes.

One of the strongest passions and the noblest that God has implanted in the heart of man, is love of country. And to every one who believes in an existence beyond the grave, who believes that this life is but a preparation for eternity, his country is the nation that secures to him and his posterity freedom of conscience and civil equality, that leaves him and them free to worship God according to the dictates of conscience,

* Delivered by the Editor on the occasion of the State Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, at St. Cloud, Minn., May, 1895.

and makes them before the laws the equals of their fellows. Without these boons, the fairest spots on earth are, to those born in them, places of more dismal exile than Siberian mines. With these boons, foreign lands, be they the inhospitable shores of the Arctic Sea, are more radiant with happiness than tropical climes. In quest of these boons the truest patriots have abandoned their native lands to find or to found a country in foreign parts.

When we speak, therefore, of American patriotism we do not mean so much the love which we naturally bear this vast country with its glorious rivers, valleys, mountains and forests—but our undying loyalty to the principles of freedom of conscience and civil equality for which America so proudly stands. American patriotism, in this sense, is a subject which embraces the whole globe, and the whole duty of man. The American patriot is the soldier of civilization. Upon American patriotism in this sense depend the future destinies of the world. For over two thousand years men have struggled blindly, confusedly sometimes, but steadily, always toward that higher freedom which makes liberty the bulwark of prosperity and the fountain of happiness. That struggle bore but little visible fruit until the government of the United States of North America was founded, based upon the rights, the inalienable rights of mankind. One hundred and forty years ago this republic first became apparent, but the roots from which it springs grew and flourished for centuries. This government does not depend upon phrases com-

mitted to paper, but upon principles planted in the heart of man from the beginning of the world.

The beginning of the republican form of government is not of American origin, nor does it originate in any one country known to the civilized world. We cannot find its germ upon this soil, but upon the soil which was reddened with the Blood of the Redeemer. It was not first announced to man, when amid the booming of cannon and the pealing of the liberty bell, the world was informed of the birth of a new nation, but when the star of Bethlehem shone in glory over the manger where the Infant was cradled and the dawn was made immortal by the songs of the angels telling of "Peace on earth and of good will to men."

When this Government went into operation by the shores of the Atlantic and the immortal Washington became the first executive of the republic,—it had first been proclaimed by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, when the Saviour of mankind declared the eternal truth that all men are born equal in the sight of His Father. This republic then is the crowning glory of human progress. It is the natural outcome of Christian civilization. A government based upon the principle of the equality of all men before the law is the inevitable fruit of a moral dispensation based upon the equality of all men in the sight of God. Its democratic principle of political equality was a necessary sequence of the Christian principle of the moral equality, and democracy is Christianity applied to civil institutions. From the very moment when the Saviour of mankind bade His disciples go forth and teach His Word it be-

came inevitable that the triumph of Christianity should mean the destruction of every form of government based upon the inequality of the human race. The first builders of constitutional freedom were the Apostles who preached the Word of Christ.

The Roman Empire foresaw at once that the growth of Christianity meant its destruction. It sought to check the new faith in the blood of its professors, but persecution was simply the means by which the light was diffused into every quarter of civilization. Slowly but surely and steadily, the mighty empire that dominated the world crumbled to ruins, its foundation sapped by the moral force of the new dispensation. The legions that had carried their eagles in triumph through the whole area of civilization were powerless to withstand an enemy that fought not with the sword that destroys, but with the Cross that saves; that aims not to destroy the body but to enlighten the mind of man. And from the hour when the portent in the skies foretold to Constantine the triumph of his arms and the Christian faith became the dominant spiritual influence of the world, its mission to accomplish political liberty was fixed. But only a small part of its task was then established.

It is one of the most interesting features of the study of history to watch the steady growth through all the mutations and changes of fourteen centuries, of the principle of liberty, of the principle of constitutional freedom, which was advanced by forces that seemed to be hostile, as we look back to the period when the northern forests gave forth their hordes of barbarians

before whose invasion the old civilization fell; as we look back to the invasions, wars and turbulence of the Middle Ages — through it all we can see the hand of God ever moving, swaying, controlling these discordant elements into a force which ultimately prepared mankind for constitutional liberty.

As the waves of the ocean breaking tumultuously on the shores seem to be wasting their energy in destructive turbulence and confusion, but are all the time obedient to fixed laws, fulfilling the purposes of nature, and nature's God, so these tribes, so these nations and races sweeping down over the fertile plains of Europe, submerged in turn before the advent of fresh currents, overturning the landmarks of the ancient civilization, trampling under foot the light of learning, and apparently the light of liberty — were nevertheless the instrument preparing the progress of the human race, gathering together the stones, mixing with their blood the mortar of which the foundations were constituted, upon which the temple of liberty stands in this country to-day.

In the establishment of feudalism in Europe it seems as if the night of impenetrable darkness had settled down over the face of the world. The policy of feudalism was necessarily the policy of force. Men had conquered territory by force; they were forced to defend it by the torch. The whole system of government was based upon prowess in the field, the capacity to defend that which had been won in battle.

In such a state of society, woman was necessarily degraded to the condition of a plaything, a piece of

property less valuable than the horse, or the cattle, which had been the subjects of contentions between warriors. And in the face of that condition of civilization, in the face of that moral night, Christianity proceeded to preach the doctrine that the weak and the strong were equal in the sight of Heaven. When men recognized the spiritual equality of man it became absolutely necessary and essential that sooner or later they would recognize his political equality. From Christian pulpits the seeds of liberty fell every day, although those who scattered them were probably unaware of the crop which they were destined to reap.

The institution of chivalry was founded, growing up from the manners and morals and customs of barbarism. It took woman from the degradation in which she was plunged. It softened men, it condemned men who looked upon her as beneath the notice of warriors, by preaching to them the story that a greater conquest than had ever been achieved by armies, a greater victory than had ever been won by human arms, was won by woman, won by Her from whom sprang the salvation of the human race.

Gradually, inexorably, steadily, woman was lifted higher in popular estimation. The object of chivalry was mainly the defense of the purity and honor of womanhood. The man who aspired to knighthood spent the night before his investiture in a long vigil in a church beside his armor, clothed in white, typifying the purity of the life he was to lead which was to make him worthy of the woman in the defense of whose honor he was prepared to die. And coming up from

this was founded the family, the home,— and the modern state is but an aggregation of families. So chivalry, as the stone sunk deep out of sight beneath us supporting this structure, was the original foundation stone upon which the government of the modern state was founded, and by which the advent of freedom was prepared for throughout the world.

Chivalry passed away. Feudalism crumbled to pieces. The year 1492 witnessed the end of the old dispensation. The power of barons was destroyed, the power of the nobles was checked. Absolutism was everywhere raised upon the ruins of the representative institutions which had been founded in the road of the original conquerors of Europe.

The Old World had witnessed the growth of personal domination, founded largely on the instinct of the people to secure defense for the results of its own industry. The belief that feudalism with its wars and confusions, was fatal to the growth of wealth and of material prosperity had induced the toilers of the world to take refuge in absolutism and the rise of kingly power was largely the growth of commercial development. The Old World was unfit for an experiment of self-government.

The Providence of God is no more visible in the preparation of mankind for the great experiment under which we are living, than in the veiling of this continent through all the formative period of modern civilization, and the revelation of it to the world when the germ of liberty was ready to be transplanted across the sea, and a new virgin soil furnished opportunity for the growth

of its branches, the development of its life, and, let us hope, the universal extent of its influence.

In 1492 Columbus launched his bark upon the sea. Its prow was turned westward. The most momentous event in modern history had occurred. And yet Columbus was but the fruit of conditions which had been in course of preparation for ages. Columbus was literally pushed across the sea by a course of human destiny. The Old World with its survival of prejudices of barbarism, with absolutism growing up as a means of refuge from reckless wars was unfit for the planting of this germ, and so Providence guided this bark, freighted with human history, to these shores. Here the tree of liberty was planted under circumstances which encouraged its growth and which insured its life.

Nowhere is the Providence of God more visible than in the character of the men whom He directed to these shores and the conditions under which they were settled. Here was a virgin soil to be conquered. Here were primeval forests to be felled. The strong arm was of more use in cutting down a tree than a lineage of a thousand years. The bullet of the Indian was just as powerful against the breast of a prince as against the breast of a peasant. The value of the settler was not the blood which flowed in his veins, but the power of his muscles and the strength of his will.

In the common pursuit of bread the dignity of labor was raised to a pitch unknown in the history of the world. The men who came to this country were not seekers after fortunes. They did not come here to

enrich themselves with gold. They did not come here to plunder the soil, and then return to spend the fruits of adventure in profligacy and vice. They were the men in whom these principles of liberty never died, in whose breasts they were cherished when they had disappeared from the institutions of other men. They turned their backs upon the conditions which created absolutism, they sought this continent that they might create liberty and they did.

Providence smiled upon them. The fertile and generous soil responded amply to the exercise of human efforts, and when in the course of years their material wealth had grown to such a degree as to tempt the cupidity of their former rulers, the old device of confiscation by taxation was attempted, and then the seeds of liberty which had been steadily growing, the influences which had been working for two hundred years took shape, and the attempts of tyranny were resisted, and the resistance led to successful revolution.

And when the last foreign soldier had been driven from our soil, when the polluting step of invasion had been washed out in the blood of patriotism, this country had taken the initial steps toward the achievement of its destiny. A government was still to be formed to replace that which had been overthrown, and if I have said that I believe that this government had its origin two thousand years ago in the Divine Plan of Redemption of mankind, I refuse no title of credit to the patriots and statesmen who framed the Constitution and launched this republic upon the sea of human ex-

periment. I do not believe that they founded a new truth, for truth in its nature is eternal and immortal; but they discovered the truth; they knew it; they made it the underlying feature of the political structure which they raised. And thus America was founded upon truth and justice. Her stones were laid in order and her foundations with sapphires under the guiding hand of Divine Providence Itself. She was constructed to last, she was built for immortality, if the work of man may justly aspire to such a title.

It has been said that the framers of this Constitution established it upon the model of the English government, but those who make this criticism know little of the political conditions of Europe at the close of the eighteenth century. The man who says that this Constitution is based upon the model of anything that existed in the world a hundred years ago is ignorant of human progress. One hundred years ago there was not upon the face of the world anywhere a single government which would form the model for a liberty-loving people. The English constitution in 1789 was not the English constitution of to-day.

A few years before this Constitution was adopted the whole power of the English government was put in force in endeavoring to discover the author of the "Letters of Junius," that he might be punished by pains and penalties as a person who had been so rash as to criticize the ducal favorites of a royal court. Free speech was unknown in England, free speech was forbidden; it was repressed, it was punished. England

was not a free country. It had ceased to be a monarchy; it had become an oligarchy of landed proprietors.

This was the condition of England, but the condition of the people of the rest of the world was one of such awful oppression that the mind of man recoils from the contemplation of the lives that they lived. Everywhere the absolutism which in 1492 had been young and vigorous, responsive to the power which created it, had become enervated by luxury, rotten with age, vile with every character of strife and riot.

It was at that moment so dark to the people of the world that the framers of this Constitution launched this Government, and they should be crowned in universal glory, in the mind of every lover of his race who reflects that in the midst of this general darkness, that in a period of universal oppression, they established a government based upon the absolute equality of mankind.

But this Government, though builded upon truth and justice, was still beset with the greatest perils. Almost immediately after the adoption of our Constitution the great revolutionary movement in Europe began. Liberty which had lain prostrate for ages suddenly started to her feet, but she was mindful of the injuries which she had received and suffered and of the interests of the men in whose name she had acted. The torch which she lifted did not guide her footsteps as in America, to a constructive policy, but rather to the destruction of those who had oppressed her.

The whole world recoiled in horror from a spectacle

of a democracy that had arisen by the guillotine, and its horrible rites cradled in the blood of its best citizens. The sanguinary excesses committed in the name of liberty in Europe, awakened a serious doubt as to the future of this republic, and it is to the everlasting credit of the American people, it is the vindication of our constitutional system that although buffeted at the very moment in which it began its voyage, by waves which would have engulfed a weaker craft, it rode triumphantly to sea. And the noble ship of state, after the lapse of a hundred years, her timbers are staunch, her yards stand as squarely, her masts as firmly as when she began the voyage for the benefit of the human race. The American Republic has lasted now over a hundred years, and to-day it is the only form of government which can be said to have survived the changes of the last century.

When we look over the history of this country, one hundred years, we are filled with gratitude and reverence to God for the Providence which has always overshadowed us, always guided us, always delivered us from difficulties.

Here is a government based upon the theory that it requires no special training to administer it. Here is a government founded in exact and open and righteous defiance of a theory that there must be an educated class before you can safely trust it with suffrage, and here is a government which has displayed a statesmanship of the common people in every crisis that has confronted it, which has enabled it to surmount difficulties, to triumph over obstacles, to solve problems which had

perplexed the statesmanship of the learned world, of the schools, and of those who claimed to be the Lord's anointed rulers.

We have met every difficulty; we have triumphed over every danger. That God Who sustained the drooping spirits of the patriots at Valley Forge, Who tempered the wisdom of Washington so that the sword that delivered us from foreign invasion was the instrument that aroused for us domestic liberty, held high the courage of the American people, and through the smoke from the Capitol at Washington, did the power and the strength of our leader hold high our courage and our resolution until behind the bales of cotton at New Orleans the independence of this country was confirmed forever.

The question of slavery was handed down to us as one too difficult for the builders of the Constitution to meet, and the country which had grown under the influence of the union met that question and its kindred question of secession. It had proved its power to withstand foreign aggression. It now proved its power to maintain its solidity and strength and existence from domestic fires. It scorned to compromise with desertion or to dally with secession.

But when the last gun of that conflict had been fired, when the smoke of battle had lifted from the fields of the Civil War, when the streams which had run red with blood of brethren had resumed their course, clear and placid as crystal, to the sea, and the South, beaten, humbled, overthrown from the humiliation in which she kneels, amid the ruins of her homes, and the ashes

of her cities, declared that the war was ended, the great heart of this country, the sublime statesmanship of the common people, disdaining vengeance, refusing punishment, raised that erring sister to her feet, took her to the bosom of the union, and bade her re-enter the family of States and sin no more.

Never before in the history of the human race has a civil conflict of this character been settled so finally, never before has the fire of civil war been so completely extinguished. After the surrender of the contending forces and the disarmament of the triumphant army we had not, as a result of that conquering army, any conquered provinces, but we had remade, reunited states, and with the blessing of God they will continue in that reunion stronger for the conflict which has been written in the blood of heroes and in the tears of widows and mothers.

All honor then to the patriots! All honor to those who rose above the thought of self and of selfish aims in order to save their country.

In every land the battle of liberty was the cause of mankind, but in America, especially, the battle of liberty was the battle of the world, because America is the only country whose foundations were laid in confidence upon the honor and virtue of the people.

But, soldiers, your battles are not over, although you have laid aside the weapons of war. There is a patriotism of peace, not less than a patriotism of war. The battle of liberty is never over, the camp fires of that battle are never extinguished. In times of peace there are deadly foes to be fought; the honor of the nation

must be saved in the political and moral battles which are fought from year to year with ballots, not with bullets! Peace is fraught with dangers not less perilous to the cause of liberty than that which is repelled by the volley of musketry and bayonet charge. Of what avail is heroism in the trenches, if corruption lurks in the heart of the citizens; if the interests of the nation are in the hands of traitors? Of what avail are hardships of war to save the country, if in peace the country is sold by selfish, sordid politicians? Purity in politics! This must be the battle cry. Year after year you meet together to enjoy the sweets of comradeship, which was cemented in days in which you stood shoulder to shoulder in face of the enemy, and to give to the youth of the nation a living example of the patriotism of war; but to my mind still more essential is the inspiration that breathes from out these patriotic services and gatherings and bids all men to be as loyal in days of peace as you were in days of war. And it is the same spirit that the country calls for to-day as in the days when humanity was hanging breathless on the fate of nations. The soldier of America stands pre-eminent among the soldiers of the world for his intelligence and his devotion to his country. But is intelligence in the use of the ballot less necessary than intelligence in the use of the bayonet? Does the fate of the country depend less upon devotion to the country in the days of peace than upon devotion to the country in the days of war? The world understands now that America is the battlefield upon which will be decided the mighty questions that vex mankind. Already these

questions are casting their shadows upon the future ; I need only mention the problems of labor and capital to remind you that we are face to face with issues not less fateful than those by which you were confronted forty years ago. The vast armies of toilers by whom the greatness of America is being built up have battles to fight. There is but one salvation, intelligence and purity in politics. Intelligence and integrity on the part of those who rule and on the part of those who vote. If the men who in the halls of legislation sway the destinies of this land are corrupt, self-seekers, false to their pledges, and if the citizens who appoint the men who rule are not guided by intelligence in the work of selecting their representatives, then woe to the land, — the sacrifices which you have made to save liberty will have been in vain. The flag whose honor you sustained will float over anarchy and corruption. The mind that guides the course of the vessel must be skilled in the knowledge of the stars, and the minds that guide the ship of state over the heaving waters of the ocean, must know the dangers of the deep, the reefs and rocks upon which nations are wrecked.

But, besides intelligence in the ruled and rulers, there must be also the spirit of religion pervading the hearts of those who are devoted to the interest of America. There is no true love of country without true love of God. Above patriotism is religion, which purifies and exalts and inspires love of country. Love of God and love of country must always go hand in hand. When a country forgets God, the handwriting appears on the wall. All history is a commentary on this truth —

nation after nation, like star after star, has appeared on the horizon, and glittered in the glory of patriotism, but one after the other in days of prosperity, the natural virtues that gave them greatness died out in the decay of religion, and the spirit of greed set in. In the land that forgets its God, the spirit of greed takes the place of the love of country, and festering corruptions and gangrenes its way to the heart of a nation. In the land that forgets its God, the weapons of war will fall from the hands of the soldiers, and the spirit of chivalry will perish from the hearts of its defenders.

Republics are created by the virtues, the public spirit and intelligence of the people. The great truths that must govern us are God's supremacy over us, and our individual accountability to His tribunal. If we act out these principles in our daily lives, our beloved America, developing her vast resources, strong in her material power, mighty in her intelligence, will soon shape the destinies of the world. Then Columbia, fair and peerless Queen, will plant the palm of peace, and the vine and olive of Christian civilization will flourish for all time. Thus there shall be no spot on her fair name, no limit to her growth, no waning to her glory.

THE END

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